

COMPUTERISED

# LOCAL SERVICES

PAST AND PRESENT

By

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*former Headmaster, Sutton High School, Plymouth*

**Indian Institute of Public Administration**  
**Centre for Trg. & Res. in Mun. Adm.**

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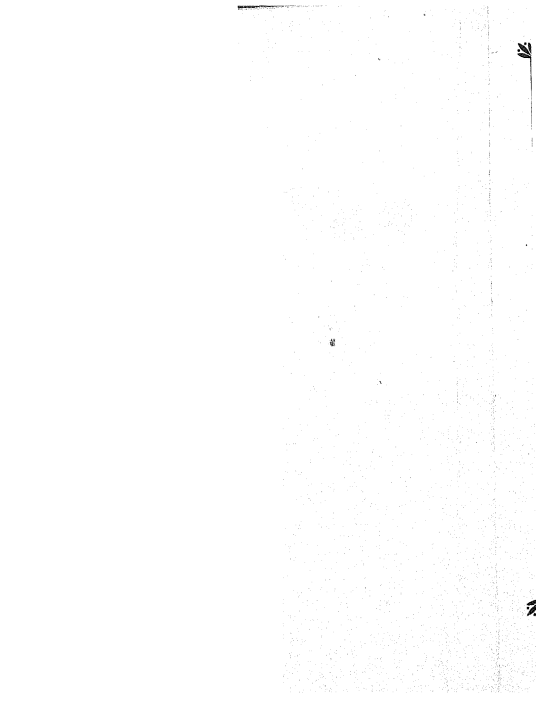


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## FOREWORD

Some little time ago a suggestion was made to the writer of this book that boys and girls in school, and perhaps many older folk, would enjoy reading the story of the *Social Services*.

A knowledge of the past is essential to a clear understanding of the present, and here you will read how, from early times, the local services have developed and improved.

The writer's experience as a member of the Plymouth City Council has made him fully realize how closely Local Government touches the daily life of the people, and how many social services, which one enjoys and takes for granted, are the result of much thought and care on the part of the members and officials of the Local Governing Authority.

He hopes that the book will help readers to understand and appreciate that upon them will rest some day the responsibility of continuing and improving upon the many services which have been passed on to them.

A.L.S.



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# LOCAL SERVICES

## PAST AND PRESENT

### CHAPTER I

#### Introductory

There is a story of a small boy, and his somewhat older brother, discussing Christmas presents. The small boy thought that it must cost Santa Claus a heap of money for all the things he gave away. The elder boy thought he knew better, and said they were paid for out of the rates.

The rates do indeed pay for many things, but they do not pay for our Christmas presents. I wonder how many of you know what the rates are and what they do pay for? Look at the "Rates Demand Note" on page 8 and you will soon learn.

There you will read "Rate payable in the pound by ratepayer 10s." You will see, too, how much in the pound is spent on each particular service, so that ratepayers may know exactly how the rates are being spent. This information is given by reason of an Act of Parliament passed in 1929.

## A RATE DEMAND NOTE

*This is a copy of the information given on every rate demand note.*

## RATE SERVICES

### CITY OF TAVIMOUTH

The following statement shows how the rate in the pound demanded is made up. It sets out the rate in the pound which would be required to meet the net expenses of each of the principal services after allowing for specific Government grants towards the expenses of the services marked\*, but without allocation to particular services of the Government grants under the Local Government Act, 1929.

The Government grants under the Act of 1929 being in aid of local government expenses generally, cannot be allocated to any particular service. They reduce by the amount shown the total rate in the pound which would otherwise be demanded.

							Rate in the £	
							s.	d.
<b>Services administered by the City Council</b>								
*Education—Elementary ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1
*Education—Higher ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	½
Public Assistance ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	10
*Police ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	½
*Housing ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	½
Weights and Measures ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	½	
Public Libraries and Museums ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	½
Lunacy and Mental Deficiency ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	
*Registration of Voters ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	½	
Necessitous Blind Persons ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	½
Municipal Elections ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	½	
Administration of Justice and Coroner's Inquisitions...	...	...	...	...	...	...	½	
Highways ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	8½
Public Street Lighting ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	½
Sewers and Sewage Works ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6	
House Refuse ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	½
Parks and Pleasure Grounds ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	½
Bathing Places and Baths ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	½
Carried forward ...							9	0½

					Rate in the £	
					s.	d.
Brought forward					9	9½
Landing Stages and Piers	...	...	...	...		½
Public Health	...	...	...	...	1	7½
*Port Sanitary Administration	...	...	...	...		½
Fire Brigade	...	...	...	...		½
Air Port	...	...	...	...		½
Other Services and Expenses	...	...	...	...		6½
					12	1
Deduct in respect of—					d.	
Markets Undertaking	...	...	...	...		½
Corporation Property	...	...	...	...		½
						1
					12	0
Deduct—The equivalent in terms of a rate in the pound of the Exchequer Grants under the Local Government Act, 1929					1	11
The equivalent in terms of a rate in the pound of the proceeds of Local Taxation Licences...					1	
Rate in the pound payable by ratepayer						<u>2 0</u>
						<u>10 0</u>

## WATER RATE

### Domestic Purposes (within the City)

By virtue of Section 14 (1) of the Tavimouth Corporation Act, 1923, and under Resolution of the City Council dated the 6th September, 1937, the Corporation levied a Water Rate for the half-year ending 31st March, 1938, of 3½% per annum upon the yearly value of the Dwelling-house, or part of a Dwelling-house, payable quarterly, subject to a minimum charge of 1/6 per quarter, provided that where the yearly value of the Dwelling-house, or part of a Dwelling-house, exceeds £300, a rebate of 25% will be deducted from the total amount payable in respect of that portion of such yearly value which is in excess of £300.

The yearly value of any premises shall be the gross value thereof ascertained by the valuation list in force at the commencement of the quarter for which the rate accrues.

All persons taking a supply of water for other than domestic and shipping purposes are supplied therewith under and subject to the provisions of Sec. 19 of the Tavimouth Corporation Act, 1915.

## ELECTRICITY AND GAS

Every Consumer before quitting any premises supplied with Gas and/or Electricity by Meter must give NOTICE thereof, either personally or in writing, at the City Treasurer's Office, at least 24 hours before quitting such premises.

In default of such notice the consumer so quitting will be liable to pay for the supply up to the next usual meter reading or to the date from which any subsequent occupier requires a supply, whichever shall first occur.

You might ask what is meant by "ten shillings in the pound." Let us take the rating of a dwelling-house. Suppose, for instance, you live in a house which is assessed at £50 a year for payment of rates at 10s. in the £. This would mean that your parents would have to pay to your local council in quarterly instalments, fifty times 10s., that is, £25. That would be your parents' contribution towards meeting the cost of the services named on the rate demand notice.

We have already mentioned two bodies, a local council and Parliament. Each body has power to order something to be done. A local council has the power to raise rates and Parliament has power to tell the council that it must inform the ratepayers how the money is to be spent. It would appear then that our people are subject to two governing bodies. And yet there is only one governing body really, for it is Parliament which gives power to the councils to act. Parliament makes laws which are binding on the country as a whole. Laws against murder, damage to property, theft and so on must be the same for every place.

But there are local laws which are very necessary in some districts but not in others. For instance a law which would apply in a manufacturing district, and which would require chimney stacks to be of a certain height, would not be needed in a country district, where there are no manufactures. These local laws are made by the councils which are elected by the various localities.

In later chapters you will read of county councils, county borough councils, borough councils, urban district councils,

rural district councils and parish councils. There is no need here to give in any detail the work done by these different councils. It is enough to say that the various councils deal with the needs of their own particular localities and their work is spoken of as *Local Government*, and the councils as Local Governing Authorities or Local Governing Bodies. Parliament is referred to as the Central Government.

You must remember that it is Parliament that has given authority to the other bodies named to do work for it. Parliament thus delegates a portion of its authority. As long as that work is well done the Central Government will not interfere but if the Central Government is not satisfied that a local governing body has acted well, then it could show its authority by overruling that local governing body, or even by taking away its powers—a circumstance which would rarely arise.

Look again at the rate demand note on page 8 and you will see that some of the services are marked with a star. This indicates that the whole cost of these services is not paid for out of the rates, but that some part of the cost is paid out of taxes. People have to pay taxes by order of Parliament, for the maintenance of those things which are necessary for the welfare of the country as a whole, *e.g.* the upkeep of our Army, Navy and Air Force, etc. There are some services which are better looked after by a locality, but which at the same time are a national interest, as for example education and housing

Because the services starred are a national interest, Parliament makes grants of money to local authorities to



help towards their upkeep. You will note, too, how often the word grants is mentioned and how grants have increased in amount as Parliament has given more work, which affects the nation as a whole, to the local authorities to do.

Permission may be granted by Parliament, enabling local authorities to raise loans for some particular purpose, such as the building of a new school. If a rate were to be raised for the purpose of paying for this at once a heavy burden would be placed on the ratepayers. So Parliament gives permission to a local authority to raise a loan. This loan must be paid back by the end of a certain number of years. As a school will last for many years it is only fair that people, who are to have the use of it in the years to come, should also pay something towards its cost. The raising of a loan provides for this.

Enough has been written now to make you familiar with terms which will be used during the chapters which are to follow. You will see that there has been a gradual development in the conditions of living and how the work of thoughtful men and women has helped to bring about this improvement.

What you read, too, may inspire you to be of service to the place in which you live now or later. Each succeeding period of time has its own problems. Three hundred or more years ago a great English writer, Lord Bacon, said it was "the duty of Parliaments to find remedies as fast as time breedeth mischief." There will always be plenty of work for you to do for the good of the community.

## CHAPTER II

### Local Governing Authorities

In 1888, Parliament passed an Act which created a new governing body—the County Councils—to administer those matters which had to do with the county as a whole.

Six years later in 1894, Parliament created Parish Councils and District Councils to deal with districts of a county.

The parish council was to have control of matters which closely affected the life of a village such as its lighting, its water supply, the care of its footpaths, burial grounds, recreation grounds and so on. In a village or parish where there were not three hundred inhabitants the parish government was to be carried on by a meeting of parishioners unless the parish obtained the permission of the county council to have an elected parish council. The parish council has to meet four times a year at least, but may meet oftener if it so wishes. A parish meeting must be held at least twice a year. The value of the parish council must not be overlooked. It has brought to the door of even the smallest cottage that self government, which is so highly prized by all English speaking people.

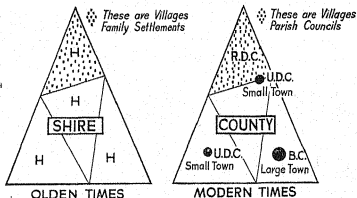
Government by the parish is, perhaps, the oldest form of local government. It is to our Anglo-Saxon forefathers that we must look for its beginnings. When the Saxons came to live in Britain they settled in small family groups. Each group claimed a certain portion of land as its own, and this

was protected by a hedge surrounding it. The land enclosed by this hedge was called a "tun" from which later we got the word township. After Augustine had visited England, and the Anglo-Saxons became Christians, a Saxon township became the home or dwelling place of a priest. The word parish is derived from a Greek word which means dwelling place, and it was this word which was used in Anglo-Saxon times to show where a priest lived.

The coming of the Normans brought about the introduction of the Feudal System. When this system had fallen into decay, we find the Anglo-Saxon parish once again became the unit of government in civil matters, and, from that time on, the parish has played an important part in local government in England.

The 1894 Act created Urban District Councils and Rural District Councils. A Rural District Council administers the affairs of a country area where people are mainly engaged in farming, or pursuits connected with country life. The Urban District Council has the government of a small town which is not big enough to be a borough. If the town should increase in population, through growth of industry, it may apply to Parliament to be made a borough. What is meant by a borough will be explained later.

The main duties of district councils are to see to matters which relate to health, water supply, drainage and provision for isolation in case of infectious diseases. Urban District Councils have some powers which are not possessed by Rural District Councils, such as the care of elementary education and roads.



Just as an Urban District may become a borough, so may a Rural District become an Urban District. A district council may be looked upon as a sort of half-way house between a parish council and a county council. In Anglo-Saxon times the Hundred Court was something like this. The Anglo-Saxons had their Shire Moots, corresponding to our county councils, and, between these and the parish, there came the Hundred Courts. Why this name Hundred was given to a district is not at all certain, but we know that the main function of the Hundred Court was the trial and punishment of criminals within the area of the Hundred.

With the Norman Conquest, the Saxon Shire gave place to the county, the territory of a Norman Count. The Shire was a division or share of land on which one tribe had settled. The shire had its own court, the Moot, which transacted business which was of importance to all the townships and hundreds contained within its area. Under the Norman

Kings the Shire Moot became the County Court. The Norman rulers valued the methods of local government of the Anglo-Saxons and many of them were continued under changed names, as part of the Norman system.

The Norman Kings introduced methods by which they could be kept informed as to the state of the country in all parts. It was arranged that judges should travel round the country, from one selected town to another, and at each hold a court called the Court of Assize. Besides trying the cases, the judges were to inquire into the way the various officers of the county were doing their work of local government. These judges, however, only visited the assize towns from time to time, and so any reports which they made to the King could only be occasional reports.

The King and his advisers wished to learn more frequently about the state of the country and about the middle of the fourteenth century many new unpaid officials were appointed called the Justices of the Peace.

The duty of these officials was to help in the carrying out of laws, especially those demanding good order on the part of the people. As time went on, the power of the county courts declined, and more and more work fell to the justices of the peace to do, not only as magistrates, but also in seeing that the countryside was well governed.

At the end of the Wars of the Roses, England was in a very disordered state, and it required strong personal rulers like the Tudor monarchs to restore law and order and to see that once again there was good local government in England. To help them to do this they made good use of the Justices

of the Peace. As one historian says "the Justice of the Peace was the Tudor man-of-all-work."

He had to fix the rate of wages to be paid to servants and labourers. It was he who saw to the binding of apprentices, and fixed the prices of various goods. It was the Justice of the Peace who appointed the parish constable. He saw that gaols were maintained in a good state, and that people who were responsible for the upkeep of bridges and highways did their work. He supervised the pensions to maimed soldiers and sailors. He saw to it also that Sunday was properly observed. When the 1601 Poor Law Act was passed it was the Justice of the Peace who was responsible for seeing that the provisions of the Act were carried out.

He also gave licences to traders to pursue their trades except such as were monopolies. As so much power was given to a Justice of the Peace some abuse of it could only be expected, from time to time, but on the whole the Justices of the Peace carried out their duties with efficiency.

The Justices of the Peace met four times a year to discuss business relating to their own county. Because of these meetings, Quarter Sessions as they were called, it came about that the county areas, in reality, were governed locally by the Justices of the Peace. This state of affairs continued until the year 1888 when the newly formed county councils, took away from the Justices of the Peace the work which they had done for so many years at their Quarter Sessions.

The county council controls the education for the county. It is now responsible for the work of public assistance, and it is in charge of the police of its area and of all main roads and

bridges therein, and of arrangements for providing for small holdings.\* It enforces the laws relating to weights and measures, and it gives licences for race-courses. It is responsible for the prevention of river pollution, and for carrying out laws which have been made to protect the health of people, and what is an important matter to farmers, the laws relating to diseases of animals. The county council has other duties to perform in keeping oversight of the work of the smaller authorities within its area.

The work which was done by the Justices of the Peace did not relate to boroughs. These have a separate history of their own. It is interesting to learn how boroughs came into being. Let us go back to Anglo-Saxon times. Our Saxon forefathers did not care much for town dwelling. But as years passed the small Saxon townships began to trade with each other and market towns gradually sprang up. They were situated where streams or rivers were easily forded, or where two or more important roads would cross, or at some place near to three or four townships. At a later period market towns grew under the walls of a great castle or monastery which would lend protection to the traders.

During Norman times towns had grown to some size and the traders of these towns acquired some wealth through their trading. The overlord of the county area, surrounding the town, was the overlord of the town also. These overlords, among whom might be the King himself, often found themselves in need of money, because of the frequency with which

\* Small holdings are plots of land less than fifty acres in extent, which are cultivated by the occupier and his family without assistance or with only the occasional help of hired labour.

they went to war. When they found it difficult to obtain, they would go to the traders and ask for it. The traders would be willing to give the money and in return they would be granted a charter which gave them freedom of trade, and authority to govern their own towns. When a town became a borough, that is when it had obtained the charter from its overlord, it created its own system of town

government, which though differing somewhat in various towns, had a certain likeness in all. It is from the towns of the Middle Ages that we get our borough government by Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors.

When the County Councils Act of 1888 was passed, boroughs which had then a population of 50,000 or more became county boroughs, that is they were to be free of all



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control by the county council, and were to have full management of their own affairs. Boroughs with a population of less than that of 50,000 are known as municipal boroughs and are sometimes spoken of as non-county boroughs which are partly controlled by the county councils. If a municipal borough should grow to a population of 75,000 or over—not 50,000 now—it can petition Parliament that it be made a county borough, and so have full power to manage its own affairs.

This brief sketch may help you to understand how old local government is in England, and to see that it still contains many traces of its beginnings. It may help you to understand what one of our historians meant when he wrote that "England's liberties may be ascribed above all things to her free local institutions. Since the days of their Saxon forefathers her sons have learnt at their own gates the duties and responsibilities of citizens."

### CHAPTER III

#### How Councils Work

We will now see how these various councils are elected, who elect them, and how they work. At different times you will have noticed some excitement in your town or village when an election is taking place for a councillor whether it be for parish, rural district, urban district, borough or county council. You will see people going to schools or other buildings, called polling stations, to register their votes.



REGISTERING THEIR VOTES

Fox

A person who occupies as owner or tenant, any land or premises within the area governed by a council, has the right to vote for a candidate for that council. The husband, or wife of such a person, also has the right to vote.

Any person who has the right to vote at a council election, with the exception of people employed by the council, can stand for election as a councillor. Councillors serve for three years, at the end of which time they may offer themselves for re-election.

When a county council or a borough council has been formed you will find in it certain members, who have not been elected by the ratepayers. These members, called aldermen, are elected by the members of the council, and

they so serve for six years. At the end of that period they may again be elected. One quarter of a county or borough council is composed of aldermen. Men or women, who are elected as aldermen, have usually been members of the council themselves for a number of years, and have learnt a great deal about its business.

A glance at the rate demand note on page 8 will show you how many and varied are the services for which a ratepayer pays, and how great is the volume of work which a council has to undertake. It will certainly strike you that the amount of work to be done is so great that, if a member of a council wished to attend to it in anything like detail, he would have to give the whole of his time to it. But, as many members of a council are business men or professional men, it is only possible for them to give a certain part of their time to council work. How, then, does a council get through its business ?

It does so by appointing committees. Each committee has certain duties to perform. It is not possible to divide the work of a council so that each committee would have an equal amount of work to do. For instance, a committee which has to deal with education, would have many more branches of work to attend to than a committee which had the care of parks and recreation grounds.

In order that it may give proper attention to these different branches of work an education committee is composed of many more members than is a parks and recreation committee.

Sometimes a committee finds it advisable to divide itself into sub-committees so that particular attention may be

given to special aspects of its work. For example, an education committee usually divides itself into sub-committees for Primary Education, Secondary Education, Medical Treatment.

Once each month a full committee gets a report from each of its sub-committees. This report is presented in brief, clear statements which are called minutes. It is the duty of the full committee to consider each of these minutes, and, if it is in agreement with a minute, it is said to pass it. If it is not in agreement, the full committee rejects it or the minute may be sent back to the sub-committee for further consideration.

Most councils meet every month. At a meeting any member is allowed to ask questions or to make any useful criticism.

It is by sub-division, as outlined above, that a council as a whole is able to keep in touch with all its work.

There are certain committees which a borough or city council must appoint. These are called Statutory Committees, which include the Watch Committee, a special body which deals with questions of police, also the committees for education, for the care of mental defectives, and for maternity and child welfare.

The formation of any other committees is left to the option of the councils themselves. The work undertaken by local governing bodies, however, tends to increase, and so councils have to increase the number of their committees.

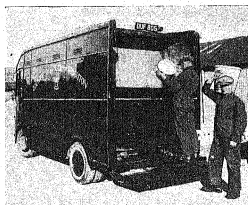
Sometimes there are co-opted members of committees—that is members who are elected by a council to sit on one of its committees without being a member of the council.

Co-opted members are usually elected on the Education Committee, Public Assistance Committee, Library and Museum Committee, and the Committee for the Care of Mental Defectives. These members are co-opted because of some training or experience which they possess which would be specially helpful in the work of that committee.

Each committee of a council has its own chairman, and the chief official of the department with which the committee is concerned attends all meetings. For instance, the chief officer for education, the Secretary or the Director of Education, attends all meetings of the Education Committee. It is not too much to say that success depends largely on these two people, the chairman of a committee and the chief official concerned.

The chairman at a city or borough council meeting is the Mayor or Lord Mayor. On his right sits the Town Clerk, who is the chief legal officer of the council, and who is responsible for the correct recording of the minutes of the council, though the actual work is done by one of his staff, who is skilled in minuting. The person who presides over a Rural, Urban District, or County Council is called the chairman, and the chief advisory officer is called the clerk.

The conduct of the meeting of council, important as it is, is only one of the functions of a Mayor or Lord Mayor. To show fully how much a town or city owes to its Mayor, it would be a good exercise for you to read through your local paper carefully and to make note of how much the Mayor or chairman undertakes during his year of office in the service of the community.



REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLE

*By courtesy of the Brighton Corporation*

The vehicle is for rear loading only so as to avoid refuse being blown about the street during collection

## CHAPTER IV

### Public Health

#### Removal of House Refuse and Disposal of Sewage

Now let us take one of the items shown on the rate demand note (p. 8) "House refuse. Rate in the £ 5½d."

You all know what is meant by house refuse. The dustman is a familiar figure. Now what does 5½d. in the £ mean. It means that the occupier of a fairly large house assessed at £50 a year for rates has to pay 50 times 5½d. during the year for having his house refuse removed for him—that is less than 5½d. each week. You might ask, could he not be allowed to remove the refuse for himself, and so avoid the above payment. I am afraid not, and in any case, could

he remove it at a cheaper cost than he is charged for having it removed for him?

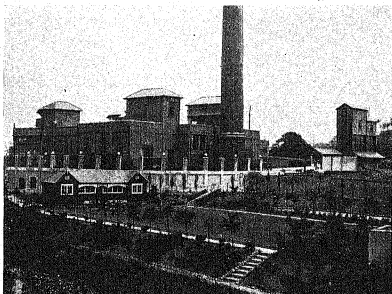
There was a time, however, when a householder was responsible for the removal of his own house refuse. A few hundred years ago people got rid of their house refuse in a very simple way. They threw it into the narrow street. In your history books you have read of plagues. Small wonder is it that we had the Great Plague of London in 1665.

Later in many towns regulations were made which compelled each householder to keep the street in front of his house clean. What became of the refuse? If the householder had a fairly large garden or other piece of land attached to his house, getting rid of the refuse would not be too difficult. But if there were no such garden, what then? The town authorities railed off a piece of land outside the residential part, on which all refuse was to be dumped. Townsfolk were fined, or otherwise punished, if they did not make regular use of this communal dump. As you will readily understand, the dump was changed from time to time, so that no one dump should get too big, and, consequently, become a danger to public health.

Notice that we are tending towards the modern dustman. Sometimes people did not find it convenient to move their refuse themselves. The town authorities appointed one or more men to cart away the refuse, and for this service the householder had to pay—just as householders do to-day.

But the removal of house refuse at the present day is not the simple affair it was in times gone by. Towns are many times bigger, and the refuse in consequence

very much greater in quantity. The 5½d. a week, which the £50 householder pays, is not only for removal of his house refuse, but also for its destruction or disposal.



REFUSE DISPOSAL WORKS

*By courtesy of the Birmingham Corporation*

Some authorities whose districts lie near the sea dispose of their refuse by dumping it into the sea. But for most places disposal is not so easy. It requires much care and thought.

There are various methods of disposal. One is by incineration or burning to ashes. All the refuse collected is taken to a depot or centre. Here it is burnt in forced draught destructors. Under the separation or salvage method the refuse is separated into various parts by machinery designed



for the purpose. It is first divided into burnable and unburnable elements. Then cinders and metals, and so on, are extracted with a view to further use. A large amount of clinkering is also crushed and graded into various sizes for use in concreting, road-making, garden paths, and so on.

Expensive and carefully-constructed machinery must be used in each of these two processes.

As regards tipping, you must yourselves be aware of hollows, or low-lying land, which have been filled in with refuse brought by the dustman. Where this occurs the local authority, through its officers, sees that every precaution is taken that the refuse tipped shall in no way become harmful to health. Carefully laid out tipping places have in many towns provided capital recreation grounds.

We have not said anything about the collection of house refuse, but we have all seen the dustman at work. Notice the vehicle in which the refuse is deposited, and how much care is taken that none of the refuse shall be scattered in the street. Observe with what regularity, as to the days and times, the dustman appears at your house.

Have you thought of all the planning and organization needed for this collection?

You will now see that for 5½d. per week a £50 householder gets a good return, so far as the collection and disposal of his house refuse is concerned. It is hoped to show you that he gets good value, also, for the other services for which he pays.

This careful disposal of house refuse, which we take so casually, is one of the main reasons why the sickness rate,

though still too high, is less than one quarter what it was in the years gone by.

SEWAGE.—Look again at the rates demand note and you will see, "sewage and sewage works, 6d. in the £," that is, a householder whose house is assessed at £50 a year is required to pay 25s. a year as his share of the cost of sewage and sewage works.

Just think how elaborate the system of sewage and drainage must be in London, and the big cities of the North of England. Think, too, how costly must be the making and maintaining of these sewers.

It is not so long ago that little care was taken over the disposal of sewage. Many English rivers were turned into open sewers. This might appear to be a good way of getting rid of sewage material; but one must not forget that the waters of many of these rivers supplied the drinking and cleansing water for the homes. Often this was taken from the dirtiest part of the river and reached the houses unfiltered. Small wonder is it then that epidemics, like fever and cholera, were frequent and disastrous.

We have taken some time in considering these two items of the demand note, which concern, definitely, the health of the community. No greater duty devolves on any local governing body than that of seeing that the people in its area experience conditions necessary to healthy living.

## CHAPTER V

### Public Health (*Contd.*)

All food sold must be in consumable condition. All persons suffering from infectious diseases must be isolated.

If you look once again at the demand note you will read : " Public Health, 1s. 7½d. in the £." That is a person who is rated at £50, pays 82s. 3½d. a year as his share towards the further care of the health of the city. What does he help to pay for with this 82s. 3½d. a year ?

There are many factors which contribute to make, or mar, the good health of a person. It might be said, of course, that the care of a person's health is his own concern—and so it is to a large extent. But it is also the concern of the community, for the health of the community is the sum total of the health of the people in it. It is this concern which lies at the root of all our public health legislation.

One factor on which good health depends is food, which should be pure. When a man pays his share under the public health demand, he is paying his local authority for its care in seeing that the food he buys, in shops and markets, is pure and in consumable condition.

Two most important articles of diet are milk and meat. For the simple reason that milk is almost the sole food of infants, and is to a very large extent the food of invalids, and of growing children, it behoves the local authority to make certain that only pure milk is sold.

How does it do this? By employing men and women called sanitary inspectors who go round from time to time to dairies, and other places, and take away samples of milk to test its purity. One of the diseases most prevalent among cows is that of tuberculosis—a dread disease. If milk is got from a cow, which is suffering from tuberculosis, this disease can be conveyed to the people drinking the milk. An in-

quiry set up by the Government some time ago showed that nearly 2,000 people, many of them children, die every year from tuberculosis contracted through their drinking of milk.

The sanitary inspector, too, in his daily round of duty, is careful to see that no diseased meat is exposed for sale and intended for human consumption. If he does find such



TAKING SAMPLE OF FOOD FOR ANALYSIS

*By courtesy of the Manchester Corporation*

meat, he is empowered by law to seize it and take it before a justice of the peace, who can order it to be destroyed. In addition to losing the meat, the persons offering it for sale are liable to be fined very heavily.

The public generally have no idea what a great trade there is in the sale of diseased meat, and especially so in the poorer quarters of a town. Unfortunately, there are men in large towns who do not mind making a living by the sale of such meat, and it is against these men that the local authority must protect its ratepayers.

How this protection can be exercised fully, cannot now be gone into. But there is one way which should be useful, and that is to have some regular and well-conducted system of meat inspection, at the time and place, where the animals are killed. This is done in some Continental countries, and Scotland has made some steps forward in this direction. In the interests of public health there are some people who believe that all slaughter-houses should be provided by the local authority, and that private slaughter-houses should be closed.

Let us now pass on to the question of infectious diseases which may be contracted by contact with an infected person or from the atmosphere surrounding him. They may also be conveyed through the medium of a third person, or by infected articles of clothing, or by books.

The sickness rate to-day is still too high, although it is only one quarter what it used to be in days gone by, thanks mainly to the improvement of drains and sewers, and to the care taken to prevent infectious diseases from spreading, by

isolating patients suffering from such diseases in special hospitals. When a person pays his rates he is paying part of the cost of the upkeep of such hospitals, for the protection of himself and his family against the contraction of infectious disease.

In 1929, a very important Local Government Act was passed—which extended the facilities for hospital treatment. When the 1929 Act came into force the guardians of the poor passed out of existence and its work was undertaken by the county and borough councils. Part of this work was the provision of hospital treatment which could only be granted to the destitute poor. Now the county and municipal hospitals take their share in meeting the needs of a local community as a whole.

In 1948 a new development took place whereby hospitals were taken away from local control and put under national control. In other words, it became the concern of the State to see that there was sufficient hospital accommodation in every area. This affected both the voluntary hospitals, i.e., those maintained by private funds, as well as municipal hospitals, i.e., those maintained by the municipality.

## CHAPTER VI

### Public Health (*Contd.*)

#### Food Adulteration and Infant Welfare

From time to time you may read of a police court case in which a firm has been summoned for placing an adulterated food on the market, and you can learn from this that care is taken to see that food, which is sold to the public, is pure in quality.

Not so long ago one could scarcely be confident of a guarantee of purity, but with the advance in chemical science, it is not easy for any article, which has been adulterated, or which is dangerous to health, to remain on sale for any length of time.

A fairly recent report of the Minister of Health gives some examples of the way in which people are deceived in some of the foodstuffs they buy. For instance, a sweet advertised as "butter toffee" contained no butter at all, and when an article described as "egg powder," and a perfect substitute for eggs, was analysed by the chemist it proved to be nothing more than a mixture of starch, bicarbonate of soda, and tartaric acid with a touch of colouring matter and a little flavouring.

**INFANT WELFARE.**—Let us now turn to another public health activity—infant welfare work. I want you to note carefully the following figures. In the year 1900—only 39 years ago—out of every 1,000 children born in England, 154

died before they reached their first birthday. In 1906, 132 died, in 1920, 78 died, and in 1932, 64 died.

You will note a welcome reduction in the percentage of deaths, which is partly due to the greater care taken in assuring a purer milk supply, and the careful attention given to sanitation.



MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRE

*By courtesy of the Birmingham Corporation*

But the main cause of improvement is to be found in infant welfare work and the institution of infant welfare centres, where mothers can be given help, or advice, in the care of their babies.

The doctor and the specially-trained nurses at the centre deal with hundreds of small babies, and have a store of knowledge gained from a very wide experience. They will help the young mother with sympathetic advice on the way to



feed and clothe her baby properly, and how to deal with it when it begins to toddle. The mother may also be helped with advice concerning her own health both before and after her baby is born.

Nurses specially trained for health visitation, too, may visit a home where a baby has recently been born and assist the mother with advice. At one time such visits were not welcomed, but the health visitor is now received in most cases as a friendly adviser who can do much to help.

There is no doubt that, as a result of infant welfare work, more and more parents are displaying an intelligent interest in the health of their children. This is all to the good.

We are all apt to judge things only as they now are. It is good to look back occasionally, and see how matters stood in the years gone by. The infant death-rate is one-third, to-day, of what it was in 1850, and a child born to-day, may expect to live 17 years longer than the child born in 1850.

In many places mothers have to go out to work. They cannot take their babies with them, and if they did they could not attend to them properly. The day nursery comes to their help. For a small fee the day nursery undertakes to look after their babies for them, while they are at work, and to see that they are fed, washed, and generally well cared for. The mother leaves her baby in the morning, and in the evening calls for it, and takes it home with her.

The care of the health of the child at school will be dealt with in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### Public Health (*Contd.*)

#### The Importance of Pure Water—Swimming Baths, etc.

Another and perhaps the most potent factor making for the health of the people is a pure water supply.

If you look once again at a rate demand note you will see that the ratepayer does not pay for his water service, as he pays for the other services rendered him by the local governing body. There is a special rate made for supply of water. In some districts he does not pay for his water at all to his local authority. These districts are supplied by water companies.

We are all apt to take many of the good things of life for granted because they are easily obtained. A person wants a drink of cold water. He turns on a tap and gets it. If he were in some towns on the Continent he would be very unwise to do so because he could not be assured of the purity of the water as he is assured of it at home here in England. But not very many years ago he could not have been certain, even in England, that the water he was drinking was free from dangerous impurities.

At the present time more than 80 per cent. of the population use water supplied by the local authorities. As

long ago as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries some local authorities made themselves responsible for the water supplies of their towns. But as time went on many of these towns seem to have given up their powers and, by the commencement of the nineteenth century, supply of water by the local authorities was almost non-existent. Most of the supply had passed into the hands of private companies trading for profit. And many places which still owned the sources of water supply had farmed out the supply to contractors.

In 1835, the important Municipal Corporations Act\* made possible the development of the local government system as we now know it in England. It was passed because of the numerous abuses, which had crept into the government of boroughs, none of which was more serious than the deplorable state of our water supplies.

Let us consider some examples. In one large city only one-quarter of the houses was supplied with water. The poorer people were left to get water as best they could. In another town the water was frequently unfit for use, being tainted from the cesspools. In other towns water was sold at very high prices. People had to wait about to get it and then had to carry it for long distances.

In some places the poorer folk had to beg, borrow, or steal the water they needed. No wonder disease was so prevalent among the poor.

One of the first duties following upon the 1835 Act, was

\* The idea underlying a Corporation is that it is a body of people who act together for some common purpose. A Municipal Borough Corporation refers to the Mayor, Aldermen and Council.

that towns and cities should provide, or see that there was provided, a good and efficient supply of pure water. Many corporations thought the best way to ensure this would be to get the water supply undertakings into their own hands.

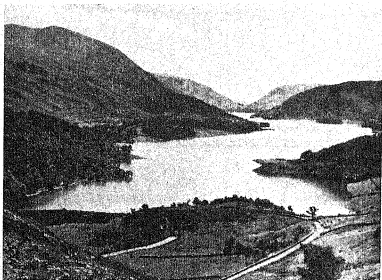
But to buy these undertakings was not an easy matter. The private companies were not willing to give up their monopolies and only one by one did some of them do so, and then only after they had been heavily compensated.

In 1875, the Public Health Act was passed, which obliged a local authority to provide, or to have provided, an adequate supply of pure water.

It will give you some idea of the pains taken to ensure this when you learn that shortly after the passing of the Act, Glasgow drew upon the distant waters of Loch Katrine for her supplies, to be followed by Manchester, who got her supplies from the Lake District, and Liverpool and Birmingham whose supplies came from the hills of Central Wales.

You will glean from the distances these big cities bring their water, how much we owe to the work and skill of engineers. The first pipes were made of hollow tree trunks, mostly elm trees, as the wood of the elm withstands water better than any other wood. The process was to drive the small end of one trunk into another, and then to caulk the joint with tow. These first pipes had two serious defects. They were wasteful and they would not stand any great pressure. An attempt was made later to use stone pipes. These were clumsy, and they were found to be too porous.

Then followed the use of cast-iron and steel pipes. Engineers are now considering how far the asbestos cement pressure pipe may be used.



A FAMOUS RESERVOIR

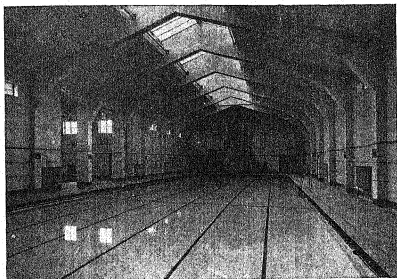
Thirlmere and Helvellyn—looking south, with the big dam in the foreground.

*G. P. Abraham, Ltd.*

The reservoir is a method of storage which still retains its utility and can meet all modern needs, thanks again to the skill of water engineers. Filtration has played an important part in ensuring that water shall be pure, and research work in this direction has resulted in the elimination of water-borne diseases like cholera and enteric.

Although you can get a drink of cold water so easily

now, it is only possible for you to do so as a consequence of much care, thought and skill on the part of those who have gone before us in the last hundred years, during which time, owing to a very large extent to the purity of water supplies, the death-rate has been halved.



A MODERN SWIMMING BATH

*By courtesy of the Birmingham Corporation*

A good water supply will also ensure that a town can provide public swimming baths, washing baths and wash houses. The need for swimming baths can be readily understood by anyone. Swimming is an excellent exercise which brings into play practically all the muscles of the body.

At the same time the body is kept clean. There is no exercise which is better for health than swimming. In addition it is an art which makes for personal safety, and which may be not only a means of saving one's own life but that of others. Swimming is so useful that baths now often form a part of recently built schools.

Unfortunately there are no bathrooms in many of the older houses, and especially in the homes of the poor. But houses and flats recently built usually contain bathrooms. In different parts of a big city, or town, however, are to be found public baths for the use of those who have not got them in their homes. The need for baths is obvious. Not only is personal cleanliness necessary for the maintenance of good health, but to be personally clean is a duty, which one person owes to another.

Washing day presents many difficulties to people living in small homes, and to flat dwellers, particularly in the older parts of a town. In order to make it easier for people who need help, town authorities have built public wash houses where these people may go and do all their washing.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Parks and Open Spaces

A consideration of the health services of a town leads us on to talk about parks and open spaces. It is said that William Pitt the Elder, the great Earl of Chatham, first spoke of the parks of the Metropolis as "the lungs of London."

He probably thought of these parks as places where people could breathe in air which was much fresher, and so more health-giving, than that of crowded streets and closed places.

Everyone is familiar with the work of the lungs of the body which take, from the air around, the oxygen necessary for the upkeep of animal life.

The purer the air is, the more health-giving it is. The breath which is emitted from the lungs contains a greater proportion of carbon dioxide, which becomes part of the air around. If the surrounding air becomes too laden with carbon dioxide it is not good for a person to breathe it.

Now, the air of big towns tends to become impure—that is, to contain too big a proportion of carbon dioxide. When you recall that the green parts of growing plants take in this carbon dioxide, decompose it, and then work it up into new compounds for the building of their own tissues, you will see how valuable trees, shrubs, and grass are in keeping fresh the air of our towns and cities. At the same time plants give out a certain amount of oxygen. So you will see how parks with their trees, grasses, shrubs, and flowers can be called the "lungs of a place," although they act in a way



opposite to which the lungs of the body act, inasmuch as plants take in and use carbon dioxide and give out a certain amount of oxygen. You will now understand why the councils of our big cities and towns are careful to see that spread over their areas are parks, or other open spaces, planted with trees and shrubs where the citizens can enjoy rest, exercise, and recreation, breathing in pure health-giving air.

When Lord Chatham spoke of the "lungs of London" our English towns had not begun to expand to the size which we now know them. The mediæval towns were small. The houses were built close together, roadways and streets were narrow, and there was little chance for sunlight and pure air to reach the dwellings of the people. As a consequence epidemics were frequent. But the inhabitants of these small towns had one advantage which was denied to the dwellers in the new industrial towns. They could easily get to the unspoiled country lying outside their boundaries.

Here were the commons, which, for centuries, were the traditional playgrounds of the people, many of which were lost to them during the spread of the Industrial Revolution. Commons constitute in reality the foundation of our national system of open spaces. Whether due to lack of foresight or understanding, the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 made no provision whatever for the retention of open spaces. In fact, the Act did nothing to prevent the enclosure of common lands, which was still continuing under the authority of previous enclosure Acts. Later Acts which prevented the enclosure of common lands saved many towns the expense of buying land for the use of the public.



VIEW OF THE WEST HEATH, FROM FLAGSTAFF, HAMPSTEAD

*By courtesy of E. J. Burrow and Co., Ltd*

In 1845, an attempt was made to ensure that, when commons were being enclosed, some part of them should be kept for public use. But such land as was preserved was the most useless, and in no way fit for the playing of games or for purposes of recreation.

In 1865, public indignation was aroused to the full when it was proposed to sell for building purposes Putney Heath, a beautiful part of Wimbledon Common. Following on this there came into being a society called the "Commons, Open Spaces, and Footpath Preservation Society," and it is to the activities of this body that Londoners owe the enjoyment of their great open spaces like Hampstead Heath, Wimbledon Common, Tooting Common, Hackney Marshes, and so on.

Once again we see in the activities of this society how a body of private citizens can get things done when they are determined it is right they should be done. Altogether this society since its foundation has protected for public use something like 500,000 acres of land in towns and villages.

While this struggle for the preservation of commons had been going on public opinion was being gradually awakened to the need of parks and recreation grounds within the towns themselves. An Act passed in 1859, giving power to local authorities to acquire land for recreation purposes, shows that Parliament was becoming aware of this, for in the preamble to the Act we have these words :

“ The want of open public grounds for the resort of adults and of playgrounds for children and youth is much felt in the Metropolis and other populous places within this realm, and by reason of the great and continuous increase of the population and extension of towns, such evil is seriously increasing, and it is desirable to provide a remedy for the same.”

The Public Health Act of 1875 further extended the powers of councils for the purchase of land for use as open spaces and recreation grounds, and it is from this date we must look for the increase in number of our parks and open spaces.

In many towns there are to be found public parks which were once the private grounds attaching to the homes of persons of wealth. Here such a person had his hall, or mansion, set amid gardens. As a town spread, and enclosed these grounds, they were felt to be no longer desirable as a

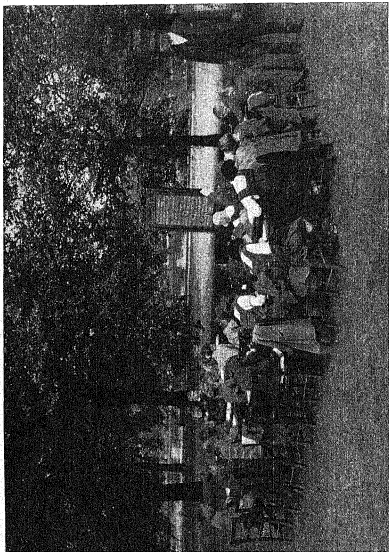
residence, so the owner was willing to sell his property to the local governing authority for the use of the public. Sometimes public-minded citizens have presented or bequeathed their land for the use of the citizens instead of selling it.

Small open spaces in some of the big towns and cities may have an interesting history. They were, most probably, at one time village greens. As towns spread, and took in the neighbouring villages, these spaces would be spared. In crowded areas, churchyards which are no longer used have been formed into gardens, and planted with flowers and shrubs. They have been supplied with seats and become welcome rest places for the busy workers in the towns.

It is hoped this short sketch of the history attaching to parks will make you appreciate the privileges you possess, and make you careful not to despoil, or in any way misuse the beauties and amenities of our parks and open spaces.

Not the least among the beauties and glories of the Metropolis are Hyde Park and the other parks of the West End of London. Other great cities, too, have their beautiful and spacious parks, where people of all ages can spend whole days at a time in comfort and enjoyment. Here are to be found shady avenues of trees, lawns, long stretches of grass, and plots beautifully laid out with varied coloured flowers, in themselves an education in taste.

In all these big parks throughout the summer our best bands, both military and civilian, are to be heard. Some of the biggest towns and cities maintain their own bands. In all these parks there is evidence of the changed outlook of the twentieth century regarding the necessity of play and



AN OPEN-AIR CLASS IN ST. JAMES'S PARK

*By courtesy of the London County Council*

open-air recreation. For the young there are stretches of land on which to play games and ponds to paddle in and shallow water on which they may sail model yachts. In some parts there are open-air swimming baths. Schools, too, which are situated near parks use them in their physical training lessons. Some parks provide tennis courts, cricket and football pitches, and bowling greens.

There are refreshment-rooms, many of which form part of a building which, for want of a better term, may be called "the social centre." Here is a large hall where concerts or dances can be held, and a room where people can rest, or take shelter in bad weather. All these amenities are not provided in the smaller parks, but it may be taken for granted that some of them are.

It is not unusual to see parties of school children having open-air lessons on plant and bird life in many of the big parks, the same parties going round at different periods of the year to note seasonal changes.

Many people are apt to forget how much has been done in providing what they take so easily for granted. They give no thought to the fact that our parks have only been obtained after a long struggle, and as a result of the care and forethought of those who have gone before us.

In 1925 the National Playing-fields Association was formed. In its work the association has been helped with money from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. This association assists localities in acquiring and laying out fields for playing purposes, and in other ways.



WEOLEY CASTLE ESTATE, BIRMINGHAM

*By courtesy of the Birmingham Corporation*

## CHAPTER IX

### Housing

#### How Slums were created and how they are disappearing

Take a walk around the outskirts of a town and you will notice numbers of houses, which have been built within the last fifteen years or so. These houses stand each in its own garden, with plenty of air space round them, and on which the sun can play. Approaching the houses are well-laid roads or paths.

The new houses are not crowded together but they are laid out according to some well-thought-out plan. Nearly all the requirements needful for a healthy life can be found in these new housing estates.

If, on the other hand, you take a walk through the poorer parts of a town, and particularly of an industrial town, you will see houses huddled close together, with little or no space round about them, so that it is difficult for either sun or air to play on them. These houses look as if they had been laid down according to no plan whatsoever.

If you were to inquire the date of the building of these houses, you would almost be certain to be told that they had been erected before the year 1875. Because, then, was passed the famous Public Health Act, 1875, which stated that in future, any houses to be built should conform to building



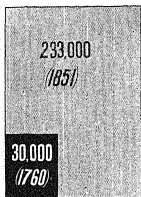
A NEW HOUSING ESTATE

*By courtesy of the Manchester Corporation*



by-laws made by a local authority. A builder was no longer to be free to build just how and where he wished. There were certain regulations which he had to obey.

Where houses are closely crowded together we have what are known as slums. You might be disposed to ask why these slums were allowed to come into being, and why houses were not always built to some well-considered plan. The reason is that they are, in most cases, simply one of the results of the Industrial Revolution, when England turned from being an agricultural to an industrial nation, when people left the country to live in towns which had not enough houses to accommodate them.



BIRMINGHAM POPULATION  
Showing Increase 1760-1851

Take for instance Birmingham in 1760. It was estimated that then there were 30,000 people living there. By the end of the century it was calculated there were twice as many people living there. By 1851, when a proper count or census was taken, Birmingham had a population of 233,000. In other words, in ninety years, its population had increased nearly eight times. In the same period Manchester increased its population

ten times. Rates of increase comparable with these were taking place in all the industrial areas.

We have already spoken of the insanitary conditions arising from poor drainage and lack of sewerage, the need of

refuse removal, the inadequate supply of pure water, and insufficiency of isolation facilities. We saw how these defects were remedied. They were tackled before what was probably the real cause, the housing question. Cities and towns were allowed to expand without control or plan right up to the year 1868, when some attempt was made to prevent this.

Builders had for years before this date built whatever type of house they wished, if it was likely to be easily sold or rented. In the poorest parts they crowded as many houses as possible on a limited space. They were not obliged by any by-law or governing body to give a house even a small yard, or any air space at all round it.

They built many houses back to back. This means that the back of one house rested on the back of another, with no space between them. These houses were said to be blind at the back, because the back of a house had neither doors nor windows.

The builder took no trouble over the foundations of a house. He did not care whether it was damp-proof or not. He simply laid stone flags on the bare earth. Many people lived below the level of the streets in cellar dwellings which had no windows, and often with the bare earth for floor. Water supply or closets to a house were of little consequence. One tap and one closet were allotted to several houses. So were created the slums, the clearance of which forms one of the most difficult problems of local authorities to-day.

Think of the difference of conditions for dwellers in the new housing estates and those of the slum dwellers of eighty to one hundred years ago. Writing of conditions in

Manchester in the year 1840, one writer says, "In a rather deep hole, in a curve of the Medlock, and surrounded on all four sides by tall factories and high embankments covered with buildings, stand two groups of about two hundred cottages built chiefly back to back in which live about two thousand human beings. The cottages are old, dirty, and of the smallest sort, the streets uneven, fallen into ruts and in part without drains or pavement; masses of refuse, offal and sickening filth lie among standing pools in all directions; the atmosphere is poisoned by the effluvia from these, and darkened by the smoke of a dozen tall factory chimneys."

This is a very telling passage. Let us now see what we can learn of the long struggle which has gone on, and is still going on, to provide such housing accommodation that every family in the country shall live in conditions which make for health and happiness in their home life.

There were three main lines on which the provision of good homes for the people should proceed.

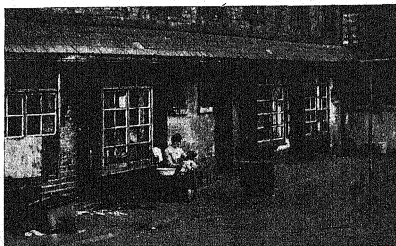
The first was that the slums should be cleared away and power be given to local authorities to do this.

The second was that power, too, should be given to authorities to see that houses, which were unfit, or were becoming unfit, for people to live in, should be made fit, and that an order could be made to compel the owner, or owners, to put their property in a condition suitable for human habitation.

This repair of houses is known as reconditioning. If the owner, or owners, would not do the work required, then the local authority were to have the power to have the

reconditioning carried out, with the power also of compelling the owner, or owners, to pay for the work when it was done.

The third was that builders should no longer be allowed to set down houses just when and where they wished, but that the building of new houses should proceed on some definite plan. There should be some measure of town planning,



A COURT IN A SLUM CLEARANCE AREA

*By courtesy of the Birmingham Corporation*

an art which was practised by the Egyptians, and Greeks thousands of years back, and is not by any means the new thing which many people suppose it to be.

The houses, too, should conform to regulations as to size of rooms, thickness of walls, drainage, ventilation, sanitation and freedom from danger of fire.

Besides the slum areas in the great industrial districts there are slum clearances to be made in many of the older towns which were built in such positions that expansion was not easy for them. In many cases, too, as in seaside towns, the workers had to live near their work. Both these causes led to a great number of people living in a limited area.

The big cities first attacked the problem of slum clearance. In Birmingham, for instance, some of the finest streets are built where once slums existed, and which were cleared during the years 1875-1882. Many new streets in Edinburgh, too, are built where once were slums, and the same is true of Glasgow and some other northern towns.

But the problem of slum clearance was not easy to overcome. If houses were to be taken down in these poorer districts new houses were necessary, and even to-day local authorities are finding some difficulty in providing houses for people who have had to leave the slum areas.

## CHAPTER X

### Housing (*Contd.*)

#### Towards Better Housing Conditions

From 1850 onwards, Parliament passed several Acts, which gave power to local authorities to build houses, or blocks of flats, for working class people. Many did so, but as a whole there was little eagerness on the part of local governing bodies to act on the powers given them. According

to the 1908 Housing Act, the working class included "mechanics, artisans, labourers and others working for wages; hawkers, costermongers, persons not working for wages, but working at some trade or handicraft, without employing others, except members of their own families, and persons other than domestic servants whose income does not exceed on an average 80s. a week." It is of interest to note that the 1925 Housing Act substituted £3 a week for 80s. a week.

The Public Health Act 1875 was very helpful to those authorities which wished to have houses reconditioned. Through it, many cellar dwellings were done away with. Houses which prevented sun and air from playing around other houses were taken down. Pail closets were gradually replaced by water closets and water was laid on in the houses. Wherever possible "back to back" houses were made "through" houses, that is doors were built at the back, and windows placed there also to provide through ventilation.

Up to 1914, a great deal of reconditioning had been carried out, and much, too, has been done during the last few years. Reconditioning, however, can only be looked upon as patching, and patched houses, like patched clothes, can only have a limited length of life. The real remedy is the building of new houses.

Although many local authorities during the latter part of the nineteenth century had failed to see to it that poorer people were properly housed, several rich people provided improved dwellings, particularly in London.

Among these we should note George Peabody, an American

who lived most of his life in England. He gave altogether £500,000 to endow a fund for the erection of working men's dwellings in London. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts was another who used her vast wealth to help her poorer fellow citizens by providing dwellings for them. Houses for working men were also provided by various companies at a cheap rent.

For several years before the outbreak of World War I the numbers of houses erected were not enough to meet the needs of the poorer classes. At the end of the war there was a much greater lack of such houses. During the war every effort had been put forth for the winning of it. Before the war ended every able-bodied man who could be spared had joined the forces, or was engaged in the manufacture of war materials. There was practically no building of new houses during the war years. Soldiers, many of whom had been married during the war, came back and found a shortage of houses. They could only share homes.

As this shortage had been caused by a national emergency the opinion of nearly all people was that the Government should help to provide the new houses needed.

In 1919 an Act of Parliament authorized local governing bodies to build houses, such as would meet the needs of working-class people and which could be let to them at rents which they could reasonably be expected to pay. This Act is noteworthy, because of the fact that for the first time, Parliament recognized that the State should take its part in seeing that good housing accommodation was provided for the working-classes. It empowered local authorities to build

houses for letting to working-class people, and at the same time promised grants of money from State funds to help them to do this. It was foreseen that the rents obtained from the letting of such houses would not be sufficient to pay the interest on the money borrowed for the building of them and to pay for the cost of the upkeep of them. Any loss to a local authority, which exceeded what a penny rate would produce, was to be made good by the State.

The Act of 1919 proved very costly to the nation. Just after the war, not only was house building required, but many factories which had been converted into munition works during the war had to be restored to their original purpose. There was, comparatively, a scarcity of building materials. So many people requiring these materials at the same time sent up the prices of them to an alarming extent. There was, too, a shortage of labour. The war had taken its toll of building operatives as it had of all members of the community. There were not enough bricklayers, masons, carpenters, plumbers, slaters, painters, and so on to meet our needs.

After World War II houses were very scarce. Many had been destroyed in the air raids, and all house building had stopped during the war. The scarcities which followed the 1939-45 war were even greater than those which followed the 1914-18 war. At the present time, therefore, there is a great scarcity of houses.



## CHAPTER XI

### Housing (*Contd.*)

#### Better Housing Conditions

Other Housing Acts have been passed since 1919, all of which recognized the principle of subsidy by the Central Government, that is, of granting help in money to local authorities to provide houses for the working-classes. Between the years 1919 and 1930, nearly one million new houses were built by local authorities, helped by subsidies from the National Exchequer, and over one million were built by private enterprise. There was a steady decrease in the cost of building during these years, which made it possible for the private builder to put up houses for the working-classes in the certainty that either from rents, or from sales, he would get a satisfactory return on the outlay of his money. Many people whose incomes are not large have been able to buy their own houses through the facilities offered by building societies.

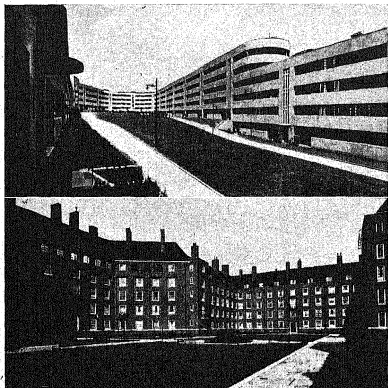
During the years following the war, up to 1930, there was some attempt on the part of local authorities to clear slums. But local authorities hesitated to clear people away from the slums, until provision had been made for them elsewhere at rents which they could pay. By 1930, Parliament was of the opinion that houses in a sufficient number had been built, as would supply the normal demand for housing, especially as it was likely that private enterprise would continue to provide further new houses.

It considered the time had come when a definite and decided effort should be made to clear away the slums, and since that date local authorities have concentrated on slum clearance. Parliament, by the Slum Clearance Act 1930, continued its subsidies to local authorities on the understanding that the new houses built should be for the use of people who had to give up their houses in slum clearance areas. These new houses have been built mainly in the outer areas of towns or cities, for new quick moving omnibuses have made it easy for people to get to and from their work. Despite this fact there are people who still prefer to live close to their work rather than some three, four, or five miles away. These people present a problem which is in process of being solved. Flats are being built on the old sites.

The mention of flats brings before the minds of many people, those workmen's dwellings built by well-meaning people in the last century. Many of these dwellings for the workers were, indeed, huge barrack-like buildings, not at all pleasing to the eye. In addition, there was but little, if any, open space around them. But the kind of flats which it is proposed to erect, and which have been erected in many places on the Continent, will differ from these old dwellings in many ways. Around a block of flats there will be a space laid out as gardens or lawns. Where a big block of flats is intended space will be reserved for provision of a playing-ground for children. Everything possible will be done to make it easy for people living in upper-story flats. Sheds will be provided on the ground floor for the storing of bicycles and perambulators. Refuse chutes will be fixed in some

## Local Services

convenient place near the staircase. If a block of flats should exceed three stories in height it is most probable that a lift will be provided. Where this is so an upper-story flat might be preferred to a lower-story one. Each flat should



TYPES OF MODERN FLATS

*Upper: By courtesy of the Manchester Corporation*

*Lower: By courtesy of the London County Council*

have a balcony, or there should be an extended balcony for a floor of flats, where the occupants could sit and enjoy the open air. Flats of this kind are being built to let at rents within the means of working-class people.

So far, we have spoken only of housing conditions in urban areas, and nothing has been said of housing conditions in rural districts. It must not be assumed from this, that there is no housing problem, so far as the agricultural areas are concerned. It is true that a cottager has an advantage inasmuch as plenty of sun and air can play around his home, and that he has his garden in which to sit. As against these benefits must be set off the lack of sanitary conveniences.

Many cottages, too, are small and consequently there is often overcrowding.

What has just been told you may help you to understand some of the provisions of the Housing (Rural Workers) Act. The main object of these Acts was to make it easy for cottages to be reconditioned so that they might be brought up to a standard of living, comfort, and sanitation provided for in the newer houses. These Acts also provided for the conversion into dwellings of suitable buildings, which, previously, had not been used for such purpose. Grants were made, too, to the local authorities to help them to carry out this work on the understanding that, for a period of twenty years, these reconditioned dwellings should be inhabited *only* by agricultural labourers, or by other persons working in the country whose wages were on the same level, and that rents should be suitably fixed.



BUNGALOWS ON THE WHEOLEY HILL ESTATE, BOURNVILLE

*By courtesy of the Bournville Village Trust*

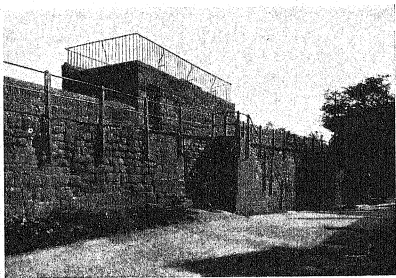
## CHAPTER XII

### Town Planning

No information on housing could be complete without something being said on town planning.

In 1909, the first Town Planning Act in this country was passed. You might ask what is town planning? Does it mean a determination to build a town in a certain district, according to a definite, thought-out plan? No, as will be shown later.

We have some such definitely-planned places in England, but, unfortunately, only a few as Letchworth and Welwyn, the Garden Cities. There is, too, Manchester's new satellite town Wythenshawe, and there are Bournville, near Birmingham, and Port Sunlight, near Birkenhead, both built by great industrial firms for the housing of their employees.



A VIEW OF CHESTER WALES  
MORGAN'S MOUNT, CHESTER

*Walter Scott, Bradford*

We know that during their occupation of Britain the Romans built the military towns, which they founded, according to plan. But under Saxon and Norman rule this planning disappeared, as the lack of lay-out of early, mediæval boroughs shows. Many of these boroughs were surrounded by protective walls. This meant in course of time congestion within the wall. As extra houses were needed not much thought was given as to where they should be built, or how, so long as they were built. Some streets were almost narrow enough for people sitting at a window on one side of the street to shake hands with people sitting at a window on the other side of the street.

Old London was congested like this. After the Great Fire of 1666, Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, desired to rebuild the City of London according to plans which he had prepared.

But the inhabitants did not wish to wait for his plans to be carried out, and so new dwellings were erected on the old foundations. Possibly, too, the Government of the time was too much occupied with other matters to trouble about city planning, and the opportunity was lost.

It is evident that during the eighteenth century there was thought given to town planning. This can be gathered from the many fine squares designed then, which one sees in a walk through London, Edinburgh, or Bath. But during the latter half of the eighteenth century began the Industrial Revolution, when towns expanded or rather became congested.

We have read, too, how the local authorities from 1850 onwards successfully coped with many of the evils arising from this congestion. The Public Health Act of 1875 made a preliminary step to town planning. It gave power to any local authority to make by-laws regulating the width of any new streets to be laid out within its boundaries. Unfortunately, this Act did not give power to a local authority to insist that the buildings should be set back some distance from the street line.

Some of these streets, as well as older streets, are now giving difficulty to local authorities. They have become streets through which there passes a great deal of traffic. They are not wide enough to cope with this traffic, and so buildings have to be pulled down at a great deal of expense

to local authorities. Many of the streets laid out after the passing of the 1875 Act are easy to detect. For long distances, without a break, we see houses of exactly the same type.

In 1909, Parliament passed the first Town Planning Act in this country. This Act provided for the proper laying out for building purposes of any land, within the boundaries of a city or borough. The "go as you please system" of the nineteenth century was dead. No longer was a landowner to be allowed to lay out his land to meet his own interests, without consideration of the interests of the public, and without giving thought to the effect on adjoining property.

As you have walked about your town or city you will have seen tracts of land not yet built upon, excluding, of course, parks and recreation grounds.

This 1909 Town Planning Act set out clearly the lines on which these open spaces should be laid out.

When an authority is considering a town-planning scheme, a large map is drawn on which is shown the parts of the town, or city, already built upon, and those open spaces which may still be developed. On this map is marked the directions which new roads shall take, and it is indicated also how wide these roads shall be. The open spaces are zoned, that is, there are areas which are marked for certain definite purposes. Some parts are zoned only for dwelling-houses, others for shops, some for both shops and houses. The houses built should not, as a rule, exceed twelve to the acre. In some cases only eight, or even six or four houses may be allowed where houses are intended to be built close to existing houses of a certain type.



# REFERENCE

BOUNDARY OF  
THE SCHEME

NEW ROADS

EXISTING PARKS  
AND OPEN SPACES

NEW PUBLIC  
OPEN SPACES

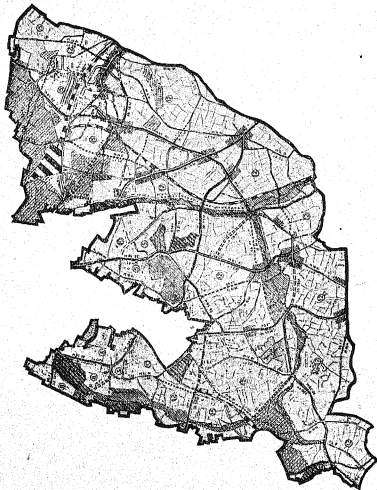
NEW PRIVATE  
OPEN SPACES

RESIDENTIAL  
AREAS IN WHICH  
BUILDINGS OTHER  
THAN DWELLING-  
HOUSES CAN BE  
ERECTED ONLY  
BY SPECIAL  
PERMISSION

INDUSTRIAL  
AREAS

COMMERCIAL  
AREAS

RAILWAYS



A ZONED AREA  
By courtesy of the Birmingham Corporation

Some areas, too, are to be kept as open spaces, either for public or for private use. On some of the land, which is to be developed, there may be groups of trees which add beauty to the surroundings. The Act provides for the retention of these trees where possible.

If the areas set aside for development is of considerable size, sites may be reserved for the building of places of worship and schools, and for places of entertainment. Other parts may be set aside for the building of factories thereon, or for any other buildings meant for industrial purposes.

There is more for which the Act provides, but enough has been said to point out the main lines which it lays down for town development. The value of the 1909 Act can be seen in the way the new housing estates were planned in the post 1914-18 war years.

After World War II a new Town and Country Planning Act was passed, which gave very wide powers to local authorities. The need for the Act arose out of the damage sustained by many areas during the war. It would have been foolish to have rebuilt the cities as they were. Many of them had narrow streets and were hopelessly overcrowded and inconvenient. The new Town and Country Planning Act makes it possible for these cities to be rebuilt on modern lines.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Public Assistance

#### The Relief of the Poor

So long as we have the poor with us, it is the duty and responsibility of the community to look after them. This principle was laid down as long ago as the year 1601, in the closing years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when the first Poor-law Act was passed.

To understand fully the causes which led to the passing of this Act we must take a glance at the history of our country previous to the year 1601. Surely there had been poor before ! Who looked after them ? In the main, the monasteries ; but the monasteries had been dissolved during the reign of Henry VIII, and the poor, who could always go to those places for help or refuge, were left to shift as best they could. To add further to the difficulties of the poor, much land was converted from arable land to pasture land, for England could find a ready market for her wool in the low countries. Fewer labourers were required for work on pasture lands. For many years then the country swarmed with beggars who wandered about in search of food.

Cruel Vagrancy Acts, forbidding people to beg, were passed, but to no good purpose. Punishment was meted out to the offender, but no attempt was made to remove the cause of offence. A Vagrancy Act of 1547 went so far as to authorize the captors of "sturdy beggars" to keep them as slaves.

Poor beggars, too, could be punished by branding, whipping at the cart's tail, or the cropping off of an ear. If they persisted in begging they could be hanged as felons. One Vagrancy Act did draw a distinction between the impotent beggar and the sturdy beggar. A justice of the peace could give the former a permit to beg. Any person who begged, without a permit, was severely punished. In addition, any people found giving help to beggars not holding permits could themselves be punished. This brief account will give you some idea of the condition of England which led to the passing of the 1601 Act.

A touch of humanity was shown when voluntary contributions for the relief of the poor were ordered to be taken by churchwardens at the close of the Sunday services. That the poor were no longer to be dependent on charity for relief was the principle which was established by the 1601 Act. The responsibility of looking after them was fixed definitely on the parish in which they lived. We have been at some length in leading up to the 1601 Act which is important because it forms the basis of our Poor-law administration to this day.

This Act laid down that the poor man, in need, had a legal claim to support, but that he should perform some work for the help given. He was a member of a community. He belonged to a parish, and his fellow-parishioners were bound to give him support if he were genuinely in need. The Act provided for the appointment of two to four householders of standing, and substance, in the parish, whose duty it was, in conjunction with the churchwarden, to levy a rate

for the support of the poor, collect it, and see to the spending of it. These new officers, called overseers of the poor, were obliged to serve for one year without pay, when new overseers would be appointed. It may be interesting to note that the office of "overseer of the poor" survived until the year 1930.

These overseers further had the duty of seeing that any children, whose parents were unable to keep them, were placed out in suitable work. They also had to provide for the relief of "the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such others among them being poor and not able to work." As you will imagine, the office of overseer was not by any means an easy or a pleasant one to fill, and many a parishioner evaded it by paying someone else to act as substitute for him.

The Act of 1601 was the law of the land until the year 1834. It was added to by an Act passed in 1662, when Charles II was King, called the Act of Settlement. This Act gave power to a justice of the peace to prohibit any person who was likely to become a pauper from coming to live in his parish. You can at least see one effect of this. As an eighteenth-century writer declared: "It was often harder for a poor man to cross the artificial boundaries than to cross a mountain ridge or an arm of the sea."

But towards the end of the eighteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution was beginning to take effect, the law of settlement became difficult to enforce, and men began to move more freely from place to place. Not, however, without some great degree of profit to lawyers, for parishes would contest in the law courts with each other as to what parish was responsible for the support of a man who had become a pauper.

The distress following upon the close of the Napoleonic Wars was intense. The 1601 Act could not meet the situation. In fact it was openly abused. Gardiner in his *Student's History of England* has these words :

"The Poor-law, as it existed, was a direct encouragement to thriftlessness. Relief was given to the poor at random, even when they were earning wages, so that employers of labour preferred to be served by paupers because part of the wages would then be paid out of rates. The more children a poor man had the more he received from the rates, and in this and other ways labourers were taught that they would be better off by being dependent on the parish than by striving to make their own way in the world." Gardiner adds that the increase of the rates, which were not judiciously nor carefully spent, "had become unbearable to those who had to pay them; in one parish, for instance, poor rates which had been less than eleven pounds in 1801 had risen to £367 in 1832."

Parliament took note of the abuses which had crept into the working of the 1601 Act, and so it passed the second great Poor-law Act, that of 1834, which remained in force until the year 1929.

Let us see what this 1834 Act did, and what changes it made. First it set out that there should be a very strict administration of relief. There was to be "no relief except for destitution." This from our present standpoint is a most harsh doctrine. It really means that aid should not be given from the rates unless a person is really "down and out," and that it should not be given merely on the ground of poverty.

The Act also introduced another principle which set out that a person who was in receipt of relief should not find it as easy to live on the public purse as if he were in work.

## CHAPTER XIV

### Public Assistance (*Contd.*)

#### The Guardians of the Poor

The 1834 Act provided for a body of three commissioners, to whom were given large powers of control. One of the first duties of this body was the grouping of parishes into a union. The single parish was no longer to be the unit for the administration of poor-relief. In forming these unions, the commissioners acted on the general principle of selecting a market-town as a centre, which could be easily reached by the guardians of the poor, for the central offices of the union.

Under single parish administration the overseers were able to take a personal interest in all the details of management of poor-relief. To continue this personal touch, the new unions were kept on the small size wherever possible. After a period of two hundred and thirty-three years we see the care of the poor taken out of the hands of the overseers and transferred to the new boards of guardians. The formation of these unions, of course, took some little time, but at the end of five years, 584 unions had been established. This number was added to in succeeding years, to remain somewhere about 650.

What were to be the duties of these new guardians of the poor? As their name implies, their primary duty was the

care and relief of the poor, and so each union was to maintain a workhouse, or to have a share in a workhouse, in which the "impotent poor" and pauper children were to be housed, clothed, and fed. They were to provide casual wards where beggars and other people in need could apply for a night's lodging, in return for which they were obliged to do a certain amount of work, to be set by the workhouse officials. Work was to be set, too, to all able-bodied men who were in receipt of out-door relief, and when this out-door relief was granted the guardians had to decide whether it should be given in money or in kind, that is in gifts of food, clothing, coal, blankets, and so on. It was thought that money might be spent in ways other than that for which it was granted.

The guardians were to see that proper provision was made for the education of the children in their care. Because of the important part which the guardians played in the life of the people for nearly a hundred years, some time has been taken in telling you of their constitution and duties.

The story of *Oliver Twist*, by Charles Dickens, will show that everything was not for the best in the control of the workhouses. It was felt that to make a workhouse anything like a pleasant place in which to live would be doing something for lazy and wasteful people which they did not deserve. The sad thing is, the workhouse was the only home for the aged poor—poor only because they were no longer able to work. Conditions, however, were gradually improved as time went on.

At first, the care of the sick in the workhouses was deplorable. In most cases, nursing, such as it was, had to





OLIVER ASKS FOR MORE—

*From "Oliver Twist"—Charles Dickens*

be done by the inmates themselves. In the year 1853, in one big London workhouse of 500 inmates, of all ages and both sexes, the only woman on the staff was the matron. Gradually the conditions changed, and more rapidly so when women guardians began to be elected in the year 1875.

About this time a movement arose, especially in the large towns, for infirmaries to be built separate from the general

workhouses. Many good ones were set up and these continued to improve so that by the beginning of the present century many of the Poor-law infirmaries became as efficient in service as the great voluntary hospitals.

An important part, too, of the workhouse system was the workhouse school. It is well to remember that it was only in 1833 that the Government first made a grant of £20,000 "for the erection of school houses for the education of the poorer classes in Great Britain." It was 1876 before parents were compelled to educate their children, or to see that they were educated. If there was little enthusiasm for education in the country generally, you could not expect there would be much in the workhouse schools. In their earlier years, particularly, they were not well staffed, and sometimes the schoolmaster had no previous experience of teaching.

It must not be thought that no good work was done in these schools. There are many men who spent their early days in workhouse schools, who carved out for themselves useful and honourable careers, and some who rose to positions of distinction. But in the early days the staff left much to be desired. Later the trained teacher took work in these schools, as in other schools.

Gradually it dawned upon people that to bring up children in the workhouse was a serious mistake, and various schemes were thought out for their proper training. There was a "boarding-out system," under which the guardians contributed a small sum weekly towards the maintenance of a child who was sent to people who were willing to act as foster-parents, and bring up the child as if it were their own.

Other boards of guardians adopted the "Scattered Homes" system, under which children were divided into groups and placed in houses under the charge and care of a paid housekeeper. These children attended the public elementary schools near to their homes. Some boards adopted the "Cottage Homes" system. These homes stood close together and were, in effect, little colonies of pauper children. This was a good system, as the Cottage Homes were not usually established in closely-built areas. They proved beneficial to the physical health of the children. But the system was rather an expensive one.

The London boards of guardians had another system. They established what came to be known as Barrack Schools, each of these schools taking children from a certain area. A school at Sutton, in Surrey, will give you some idea of the size of these schools. In 1894 it housed 1,076 boys, 101 girls, and 864 infants.

## CHAPTER XV

### Public Assistance (*Contd.*)

#### Relief of Able-bodied Poor

One of the most difficult problems with which the guardians had to contend was that of out-door relief for able-bodied paupers.

Under the early Poor-law Act, the problem was not so difficult as it became later. Until the middle of the eighteenth century England was mainly agricultural. Manufacture was

carried on in the homes of the people. Up to this time it was the duty of the parish officers "to set to work" those people needing help. What they did was not to employ these folk, but to provide them with raw material, such as wool and flax, to work on in their own homes. The parish was repaid, to some extent, out of the proceeds of their work. But as England changed from an agricultural to an industrial country, this problem became much less simple and the parishes had to turn to other methods of providing work to be done by the unemployed in return for help given. In addition, matters later were made more difficult by the effects of the European war with Napoleon.

Magistrates felt that the men, who were finding the food for the armies in Europe, should themselves be fed. They decreed that relief should be granted on a scale dependent (1) on the number of a man's family and (2) on the price of wheat at any particular time. The least amount of food required for a family was decided by means of bread scales. If the level for a family did not reach this amount then the shortage should be made up out of the rates.

The scale worked out at the price of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of bread per day per man and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. per day per woman or child, plus sixpence, and the price of an extra gallon loaf per week. These additions might mean from one shilling to one shilling and sixpence per week to a family.

This system of poor-relief, good in intent, was easy to be taken advantage of in several ways. For instance, employers lowered wages as any shortage reckoned on the food level, could be made up out of the rates.

The 1834 Act recognized that unemployed men must not be allowed to starve, and also that for what was given them they must do some amount of work, either in the workhouse or at some other appointed place. The work to be done was such that most people would hate doing, for example, breaking stones or picking oakum.\*

The reformers of 1834 dealt with the problem of poverty as if it were the effect of one cause, whereas, as you know, poverty may arise from many causes. It was, however, a good number of years before this fact was recognized. Perhaps the first public understanding that it might be unfair and wasteful to set unemployed men to breaking stones, was during the American Civil War, 1861-65. When the war reached its height the supply of raw cotton, on which Lancashire depended for its mills, was not forthcoming. We had what is known as "The Lancashire Cotton Famine" when, for the first time, a real and organized attempt was made to provide useful work for the unemployed mill hands.

Poverty, arising from unemployment, was beginning to be looked upon as some concern of Parliament and not alone that of Local Government.

A Poor-law Commission was set up in 1905 and issued its report in 1909. This commission, among other things, considered the problem of distress arising from unemployment, due to loss of trade. This report was not fully acted upon for nearly twenty years, when many of its findings were incorporated in the 1929 Local Government Act.

In the meantime, the Government recognized that poverty

\* Oakum is thick, tarred rope which is split into fibres for packing valves, etc.

was not due alone to vice or thriftlessness, but that often it was due to sickness or ill-health or loss of employment during periods when trade was bad. In 1911, the National and Employment Insurance Acts were passed. Employed people, in a good number of occupations, were to pay, compulsorily, a small sum weekly to a fund to which employers and the State were also to contribute. From this fund the contributors were to receive such benefits as medical treatment and payments during sickness, disablement, or unemployment. The position of the aged poor, too, was given consideration by the passing of an Act which granted, with certain restrictions, pensions of 10s. a week, or less, according to their need, to persons 70 years of age and over. This Act has saved many people from applying to the guardians for poor relief and many from ending their days in the workhouse.

The Government also set up Employment exchanges. These exchanges are centres at which unemployed persons can find out what work is available and where employers with work to give can learn of people looking for employment.

## CHAPTER XVI

### Public Assistance (*Contd.*)

#### From Guardians to Public Assistance Committee

We have now reached the time when the World War I broke out in 1914. For the next five years, so urgent was the need for workers that it could be met only by women coming out and doing a great deal of work which had previously been done solely by men. But from 1920 onwards there came the trade depression which always follows on all great wars, and both the Central Government and the Local Government authorities were faced with the problem of providing for the relief of unemployed persons, which rose to a number of 1,200,000.

In the main the problem was tackled by the Government extending the existing benefits and facilities. For example, those persons who had exhausted their benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act could claim further assistance and obtain what is known commonly as "the dole." The real term, unemployment assistance, has a better sound. In 1925 the scope of the Old Age Pensions Act was extended to include, in a majority of new cases, persons of 65 years of age or over, and pensions were also granted to widows and orphans.

You will have noticed as we have gone on how much was being done other than by the guardians to prevent, and to relieve, poverty. The care of the poor was no longer entirely a distinct and separate field of Poor Law work. There was overlapping of services, that is other people were doing the same kind of work. For instance, education authorities had the duty of feeding poor children, the borough councils were concerning themselves in providing work for the unemployed, and the health authorities in the care of the sick. As the years passed there was further overlapping of services in other branches of local government.

This overlapping led to the passing of the Local Government Act, 1929, which among other things, provided for the transfer of the administration of the Poor-law from the guardians to county councils and borough councils.

After a regime of 96 years the guardians passed out of existence. In their stead the county and borough councils were to set up public assistance committees. It was provided that one-third of the membership of these committees—not more—should be co-opted members, that is, persons who were not members of the county and borough councils, as the others had to be. Some of these co-opted members were to be women. This provision for co-opted members was a very valuable one. For instance, there were many men and women among the guardians who were particularly interested in Poor-law administration and who had done specially valuable work. Although not desirous of offering themselves for service in all branches of municipal work, they were prepared to go on with Poor-law work and to assist with their



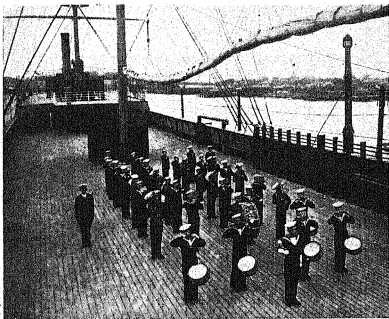
knowledge, gained from experience, those who were to be the new Poor-law administrators.

In the larger areas it could scarcely be expected that the public assistance committee of a county council could deal with all cases for relief, so local area committees known as guardians committees were then established. These committees again elected from among themselves sub-committees whose work it was to interview all people applying for relief. These committees kept in close touch with a relieving officer, whose advice they found extremely valuable. The county and borough councils, it will be readily understood, kept a close and strict oversight of all this delegated work.

The question of Public Assistance was again reviewed at the end of World War II, and an Act of Parliament was passed whereby the responsibility for looking after the needy was taken away from the Local Authorities and made a national responsibility. In the new Act considerable attention was paid to the aged. It is proposed that hostels rather like hotels should be built to accommodate the elderly people.

This is a big step forward. Many of the Public Assistance Homes in the past have been barrack-like structures. The idea of the new Act is to do away with these huge buildings and to substitute smaller, more intimate places where elderly people can be properly looked after.

The history of Public Assistance which we have been considering shows that more and more kindness is being shown to the unfortunate, the unhappy, and the elderly. This is a great tribute to the growing social awareness of our present age.



THE BAND, TRAINING SHIP "EXMOUTH" (L.C.C.)

*By courtesy of the Commander of T.S. "Exmouth"*

## CHAPTER XVII

### Education

#### Early Schools

In 1833 Parliament took its first step towards a system of State education when it voted £20,000 "in aid of private subscriptions, for the erection of school houses, for the education of the poorer classes in Great Britain."

It must not be thought that prior to 1833, there had not been in existence schools at which the working-classes could receive instruction. Scattered up and down the country there were many such schools, but not enough in number to meet the needs of children whom we now recognize as being of school age. Such schools as there were were all maintained by voluntary effort, that is by money given by people for the upkeep of these schools. In fact, many people were of the opinion that the education of the poor should be the concern solely of voluntary bodies, and not of the State. As late as 1861, a Royal Commission on Education reported "that it was not just or socially expedient that persons should have their education paid for out of public funds, and not by their parents, on whom they had natural claims."

In previous chapters we have had sketches of what was done in the past before we dealt with the present, and for this reason. It is not possible for a person fully to understand the present unless he, or she, knows something of what has gone before. And this is just as true of education, as of any other subject, of which we have spoken.

We should have to go a long way back in history before we came to a time when there were no schools in this England of ours. One of the claims of Alfred to greatness is that he established schools. From an early date monasteries and cathedrals had schools attached to them, intended for the education of monks, and those who intended to become monks. Many boys, even those from poor families, who showed promise were admitted as lay students. Towards the end of the fourteenth century schools became attached also to chantries, or chapels for priests, connected with the monasteries. These chantry schools gave an education nearer to what we understand to-day as elementary education than did the monastic schools. This can be gleaned from the following quotation. The priest was to teach "young beginners to write and sing and to read."

Although these mediæval schools were not definitely intended for poor boys, many such were admitted to them. That these boys made good use of their opportunities the after careers of many of them testify. Some of them rose to high position both in Church and State. This was not pleasing to everyone, as shown by the following extract from the work of a mediæval writer :—

"Now may every cobbler set his son to school, and every beggar's brat learn from the book, and become either a writer and dwell with a lord, or a false friar to serve the Devil. So that the beggar's brat becomes a Bishop, to sit esteemed among the peers of the land, and lords' sons bow down to the good-for-nothings, Knights bend to them and crouch full low, and this

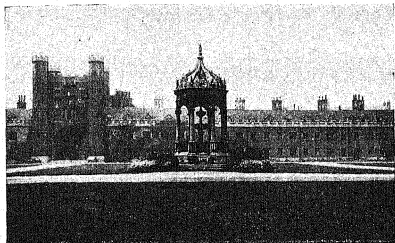
Bishop's father, a shoemaker, soiled with grease and his teeth as tattered as a saw with champing leather."

Several of our old public schools, like Winchester and Eton, came into being during this mediæval period, when we have the foundation of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. These were places of culture, with no pretension of meeting national needs.

Despite what has been said, the general standard of education was low during the fourteenth century; it was rare to find even a nobleman who could do more than sign his own name.

At the end of the fifteenth century a great impetus was given to a more general desire for knowledge. The world was beginning to open up. Columbus had discovered America. Vasco da Gama had rounded the Cape of Good Hope and found a sea-way to India. This sudden mixing with men of new lands, new ways of thinking, new races, made Englishmen wish to learn more about the world and the wonders of it. The Turks had made their way into Europe and captured Constantinople. Greek scholars fled westward, bringing with them their wealth of learning, so long a closed book to Western Europe. There was, too, the influence of the Reformation. Maybe most powerful factor of all, there was the invention of printing, which made it both easier and cheaper for books to be published.

Some of the money, which was obtained from the suppression of the monasteries, was applied to the building of schools to replace the old monastic schools which had been disbanded. Edward VI built eighteen of these schools,



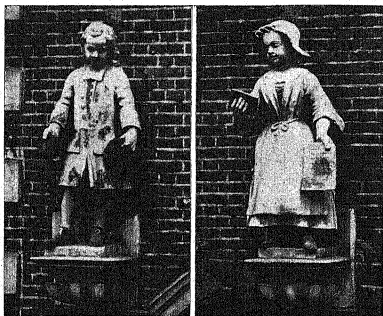
THE GREAT COURT, TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

*Fox*

called Grammar Schools, where the education given was founded mainly on the study of Latin and Greek. Merchants, both individually and in their companies, became interested in education, and added to the number of these schools, which they established chiefly in the larger towns.

But these schools did not provide generally for the education of children of poor parents. This was left to other agencies which did not begin to operate till a somewhat later period, when charitably-inclined people gave money or willed money for the creation of schools which were meant only for the education of poor children. These benefactors acted

from different reasons. Some were really troubled by the ignorance of the poorer classes, which showed itself in their general careless behaviour, and in the lack of religious feeling displayed in their conduct. Many churchmen were much



STONE FIGURES OVER THE DOORWAY OF THE ENTRANCE TO ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH SCHOOL—LONDON.—THEY SHOW THE DISTINCTIVE DRESS OF THE CHARITY SCHOOL

concerned to get, and to keep, the working-classes attached to the Church of England and they thought that one of the best ways to do this was to have children taught in schools specially created for that purpose.

Charity schools, for that is the name by which they became known, were established, and they remained part of our school system for a considerable number of years. The educational aim of these schools was rather on the low side. It was they who set as a standard the three R's, reading, writing, and a little arithmetic, with some needlework. In some, however, there was an anticipation of modern practice, for a fair number also introduced manual instruction of various kinds. In one school, we read, "the boys and girls were all set to work, some upon spinning of wool, others upon mending and making of shoes, others upon sewing and knitting, etc."

But the teaching was mainly centred on the Church Catechism, and church attendance was required of all the scholars. Each charity school had its own particular dress, and the scholars, arrayed in their bright colours, and seated in the gallery of the church, made a somewhat picturesque sight. When the boys became old enough many were placed out as apprentices, and, generally speaking, careful thought was given to the future of the pupils. In the year 1865, it was stated that there were nearly 2,000 such schools still existing. Many of them became public elementary schools under the 1870 Act, and most, if not all of them, have now given up their distinctive dress. The funds which were set aside for the apprenticeship of boys have now been converted into scholarship funds.





"A DAME'S SCHOOL"

*From the painting by Thomas Webster, R.A., in the Tate Gallery*

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Education (*Contd.*)

#### **Dame Schools, Sunday-schools and Monitorial Schools**

Although the schools with which we have been dealing were mainly voluntary, some sort of public control was exercised over them. But there were schools which were the concern solely of the persons running them. Many of these schools were, without doubt, opened up and controlled by capable people with good qualifications. But as anyone, even if he had no qualifications whatever for teaching, could set up a school, there existed side by side with the charity schools, schools which were carried on in private houses, conducted under conditions which would not be tolerated for one moment to-day. Dame Schools like the one in the picture have practically disappeared.

The fact that such schools as these could be found is an evidence that, on the part of many parents, there was a desire that their children should have some schooling and that they should at least learn how to read and write.

Let us now turn to the first Sunday-schools, founded by Robert Raikes—proprietor of the *Gloucester Journal*—in conjunction with Rev. Thomas Stock, rector of the Church of St. John the Baptist in that city in the year 1780. They opened up four schools in Gloucester for the instruction on Sundays of children who would otherwise be wandering about the streets and getting into mischief. People generally liked this idea. The movement spread and in 1785 there was formed the Sunday-schools Union. Although the first object of these schools was the religious and moral training of its pupils, secular instruction was also given in writing, summing, and reading, with the New Testament used mainly as the reader. These schools played an important part in educating many children.

The dawn of the nineteenth century found two educational reformers at work, Dr. Bell and Joseph Lancaster. Each was concerned about "the vast number of children born who attain the years of manhood and womanhood without ever having had the least instruction." Each worked on a somewhat similar system—the monitorial system. When a master was appointed to a school he gathered round him a number of older pupils of good ability and gave them instruction. These older pupils, called monitors, were then placed in charge of classes to teach what they themselves had just learnt. There was undoubtedly a growing desire

to provide some measure of education for the children of the poorer classes. How to pay for the cost of more schools was a problem which the monitorial system solved. One master with the aid of his monitors could organize and control the instruction given to many scholars, and the monitorial schools were so built as to help him to do this with the least possible difficulty.

In 1811, there sprang from Bell's efforts the National Society for the establishment of schools in connection with the Church of England. Previously in 1808, The British and Foreign Schools Society had been formed for the foundation of schools in accordance with Lancaster's ideas. These two national organizations inspired local effort, and, to get schools started in a district, were ready with grants of money to help out local voluntary subscriptions. Local management, a feature of these schools, bred a certain local responsibility and by this means a community began to look upon one of these new schools as something essentially its own.

## CHAPTER XIX

### Education (*Contd.*)

#### Towards a System of Public Education

The grant for education, first made in 1833, was renewed each year, and in 1839 was increased from £20,000 to £30,000. In the same year a further step forward was taken towards a national system of education by the creation of "The Committee of the Privy Council on Education"—the forerunner of the present Board of Education.

This committee was to consist of four Ministers of the Crown. Their main object, at first, was to see that any money voted by Parliament was properly spent for the purpose for which it was granted. Some little time after, inspectors were appointed to supervise the work of grant-aided schools and to report on them to the committee.

The grant of money made annually for the promotion of public education rose rapidly. In 1859 it had risen to £836,900. This annual grant gave an impetus to the building of schools by the various religious bodies during the years 1840-1870. In fact, so great was the increase, that fully-qualified teachers to staff them was not equal to the number required. The difficulty was overcome by the introduction of the Pupil Teacher System. By this system a boy or girl, not under thirteen years of age could be apprenticed for five years to the head of an elementary school. At the end of this period a pupil teacher was qualified to sit for a Queen's Scholarship, which would take him or her to a training college for a further training of two or three years, or he would be enabled to sit externally for qualification as a certificated teacher.

The life of a pupil teacher was not an easy one. He would teach all day and study in the evening. In the early morning, before the opening of school, for an hour or so, he would receive direction in his studies for the examination which he had to pass at the end of each year of his apprenticeship. There were some defects in this system, but in spite of them it produced many men who rose to positions of distinction, even in walks of life other than that of teaching.

The middle years of the nineteenth century saw the nation becoming still further alive to the necessity for an educated people. Popular education was an almost constant subject of discussion in Parliament in an attempt to establish a system of education, which should apply to the whole of the country, and which should be paid for partly out of the rates.

One effect of the Reform Act of 1867 was to give the right to vote to a large number of the working-classes. This extension of voting power provided further arguments for those people who had for a long time been asking for a State system of education.

An investigation made in 1869 showed that there were about 1,800,000 children attending State-aided schools, 1,000,000 attending private schools, and about 2,000,000 attending no school at all. Children attending some of the private schools were probably little better off than those not attending school, judging from the reports of inspectors.

Here is what one investigator, Sir Joshua Fitch, said :

“ In a small low room (12 ft. 6 in. by 12 ft.) in a back court I found 44 boys of ages varying from 4 to 14. In the middle sat the master, a kindly man, but a helpless cripple, whose lower limbs appeared to be paralysed, and who was unable to stand up. . . . In a corner the wife was sitting, engaged in ‘ minding ’ the six or eight youngest children. The room is insufferably close and dark ; there are not forms enough for all to sit on, and only three old desks.”

Sir Joshua further said of another private school :

“ In the front room of a small dwelling-house, half-filled with dirty household furniture, there were 35 boys, all of whom were entirely unemployed, except eight, who were writing in copy books. The master had retired (11 a.m.) to a neighbouring house for luncheon. He was a cloth-dresser by trade, and ‘ took to schooling because work was slack. ’ ”

The reports of the investigators showed that many thousand children of working-class parents were taught or “ minded ” in schools of this type.

With the information he had before him, Mr. Forster introduced his Education Bill in 1870, in very moderate language when he said : “ Notwithstanding the large sums of money we have voted, we find a vast number of children badly taught, or utterly untaught, because there are too few schools and too many bad schools, and because there are large numbers of parents in this country who cannot, or who will not, send their children to school.” Mr. Forster’s Bill became the Education Act of 1870, by the passing of which our present system of public education may be said to have begun, for by it the duty of providing for the educational needs of a locality was cast for the first time upon the community wherever the efforts of voluntary bodies failed to do so.

## CHAPTER XX

### Education (*Contd.*)

#### Board Schools

The Elementary Education Act 1870 set up new bodies called School Boards, and these bodies for thirty-three years played a most important part in the educational system of the country.

The country was divided into districts. Altogether there were over 2,000 of these districts, varying in size from a single school area to an area as large as London. In any district where sufficient school accommodation was not provided by voluntary effort, a school board was to be elected by the ratepayers of that district.

In a school maintained by a religious body religious teaching in accordance with the belief and worship of that body was given. But in the new board schools there was to be religious teaching of a purely undenominational character only, such as we have in council schools to-day. The new school boards were empowered to charge fees up to ninepence a week. They also received grants from Parliament. Where the fees and the grants were not enough to provide for the carrying on of a school, or schools, the school board for the district could levy a rate to make up the deficiency.

As you will remember, grants of money had been made to voluntary bodies for the erection of grant-aided schools. By the Act of 1870, no further building grants were to be made to voluntary bodies by Parliament. If the church, or any other voluntary body wished to build a school it could only

do so by paying the cost from its own funds. The voluntary schools, however, were still to be eligible for Government grants. The income obtained from the school fees charged, was added to by private subscriptions.

In 1876, it was made compulsory for parents to see that their children received, at least, an efficient elementary education. If they did not take advantage of the educational facilities which a district provided, they were obliged to show that, elsewhere, their children were under instruction. There were people who thought that parents would not agree to compulsion, but they were shown to be wrong. Almost all parents were anxious that their children should be properly educated. To make it still easier for children to attend school, fees in elementary schools, with some few exceptions, were abolished in the year 1891.

The curriculum of the elementary school was at first largely confined to the three R's—reading, writing and arithmetic. The Government grants were paid largely for success in these subjects, and schools as a whole could not afford to spend money on teaching subjects for which the Government paid little or no grant. Many of the bigger school boards, however, felt that the cleverer and more intelligent pupils in their schools should have a wider education. These school boards set up higher grade schools and organized science schools, to which the abler pupils from the elementary schools were sent, after having passed an entrance examination.

In these schools an education was given much like that of the secondary schools to-day although not quite so advanced. The Government did not pay grants for many of



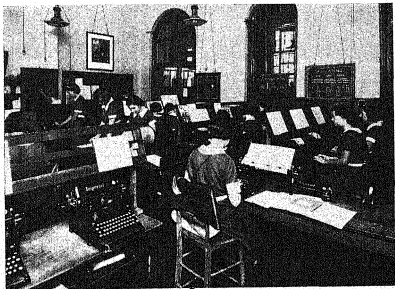
the subjects taught, but that did not matter as the money needed to pay for the upkeep of these higher grade schools could be obtained by the school boards through their rates. In 1899, however, it was held that payment out of the rates for the maintenance of these schools was not legal. It was impossible of course, that the schools should be closed, so Parliament passed two temporary Acts which made it lawful for money, out of the rates, to be spent for the upkeep of these higher grade schools, until such time as changes in the education system could be made, which was not long. In 1902, there was passed the second great Education Act. To tell the full story of the educational changes which followed as a result of this Act would take a book in itself, but even a brief statement will help you to understand what an important Act it was.

The greatest change made by the Act was to place all schools which received grants from the Government under the control of the local education authorities. The Act abolished the school boards set up in 1870. County boroughs and non-county boroughs with a population of 20,000 or more became the local education authorities for all elementary schools in their areas. All other elementary schools were placed under the control of the county councils in whose areas they were situated.

As you will remember, the school boards were concerned solely with elementary education. Secondary education had been the concern only of private bodies or persons. The 1902 Act provided for the establishment of secondary schools by county councils and county boroughs. From the outset

it has been possible for clever boys and girls to gain admission to these schools, because of the number of free places and scholarships open to pupils from elementary schools. The usual length of a secondary school course is five years, which pupils generally commence about the age of eleven.

Though a few of the higher grade schools established by the old school boards, were formed into secondary schools, they generally remained, with little change, in the new system, to be known later as central schools. These schools worked on a four years' course, which bore some relation to the commercial and industrial needs of a locality.



A TYPEWRITING CLASS

*By courtesy of the London County Council*

The needs of pupils leaving school influenced the setting up of another type of school. For instance, a junior technical school gives instruction mainly in engineering, science, handicraft, and other similar subjects for boys



HANDICRAFT ROOM IN A SENIOR BOYS' SCHOOL

*By courtesy of the Plymouth Education Authority*

who would most probably enter some form of industry in which their school training would be helpful to them. A junior school of commerce provides instruction in shorthand, typewriting, book-keeping, etc., to help those boys and girls who wish to take up a commercial career. A junior school of art plays an important part, particularly in those districts where art is linked with industry as in the Potteries, or in the cotton and linen manufacturing areas. Pupils are admitted to these schools above the age of thirteen.

## CHAPTER XXI

### Education (*Contd.*)

#### Recent Developments in Education

In 1918, the last year of World War I, a third Education Act was passed. This Act sought to make part-time instruction at school during the day compulsory for boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 16. Employers were to make arrangements to free young people to attend school at some time between the hours of 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. except on such days as recognized holidays and half-holidays. The day continuation schools were to be run more as clubs, or societies, which would prepare the pupils for the enjoyment of leisure and of social life and, at the same time, get them to meet their social responsibilities.

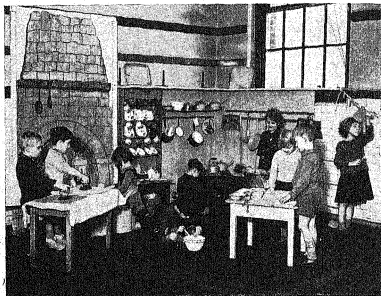
This Act still remains and it is part of the law of the land, but so far it has not been put into force to any extent, although many people hope that at some time it will be.

Another very important provision of the 1918 Act was the power which it gave to local education authorities to establish, or to aid in establishing, nursery schools for children over two years and under five years of age.

Another Act was passed in 1944 under which education was organized into three stages : Primary, Secondary, and Further. All education under the age of 11 was to be known as Primary. From 11 years of age onwards all full-time education in school was to be called Secondary. Further Education dealt with continuation classes, part-time study

in technical colleges, and full-time attendance at universities and training colleges. The compulsory school-leaving age was raised to 15.

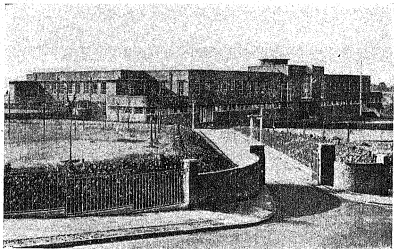
This is a very important Act. It means, among other things,



KITCHEN WORK IN AN INFANT SCHOOL

*By courtesy of the Brighton Teachers' Association*

that education never finishes : starting in the nursery school it continues to the very end of life itself. All over the country local authorities at the present time are trying to put the provisions of this new Act into practice. It will take a long time to be realized and it will cost a lot of money but it will be worth while doing.



A MODERN SECONDARY SCHOOL

*By courtesy of the Stoke-on-Trent Corporation*

Two familiar figures of school life have not yet been mentioned—the school doctor and the school nurse.

As you grow older you will find how often people, and even nations, light upon success as if by accident. You will see how this applies to the school medical service. In 1907 a Member of Parliament proposed an addition to the Bill before the House which made it necessary for local education authorities to provide for a periodical medical inspection of all the children in their elementary schools, with authority also to provide medical treatment.

This addition took up only a small part of the Bill, and it went through almost unnoticed. And yet how great and

how many are the extensions following upon it. In 1919, inspection was extended to secondary schools. Medical and dental clinics have been set up; more schools have been provided for deaf, crippled, and mentally-deficient children; more attention has been given to physical education and training, and provision has been made for the supply of school meals.

“Progress is the law of life.”

To see if we are making progress, at least over the care of child life, let us take a backward look and note how little the child was thought of just about one hundred years ago.

What do you think, for instance, of London parishes sending off wagon-loads of children to work in the mills of Lancashire and Yorkshire so that they might be relieved of the expense of maintaining them? When they got there these unfortunate children, even those as young as six years of age, had to work for fifteen or sixteen hours a day.

In 1833 the first Factory Act was passed. This limited the hours of labour for children under thirteen years of age to eight hours a day, and for children between thirteen and eighteen years of age to twelve hours a day.

We have moved far since those days, thanks to the influence, and labours, of many good and noble men and women.

## CHAPTER XXII

### Public Libraries

#### From Private to Public Libraries

Wise boys and girls will not consider their education finished when they leave school. They will find that they have still much to learn, and that the public library will be of the greatest help to them.

To every boy and girl living in or near a town in England a public library is a familiar building.

A boy or girl living 90 years ago could not have found such a place. It was not until 1850 that Parliament passed an Act—the Public Libraries Act—which empowered a number of town councils to provide libraries for the use of the public.

It must not be thought that before this date there were no libraries. There were many, but they were the property of private bodies or individuals. As you will have noticed in the course of your reading, various activities of local government usually have had an interesting history. You will probably have noticed, too, that voluntary or private enterprise preceded public action. This statement applies to the history of the public library.

“Of making many books there is no end.” In fact, it is almost certain that some form of writing dates from the very earliest stages of civilization. It is certain, also, that some form of collection of writings commenced almost as

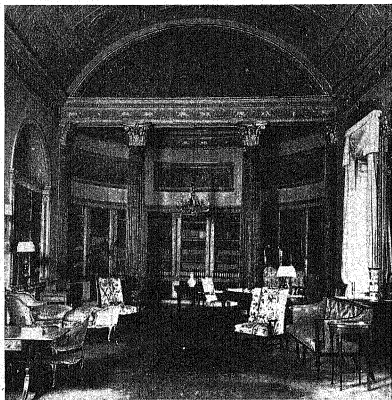


soon as books began to be made. Researches in Mesopotamia show collections of writings dating as far back as 3,000 B.C. These were found in temples and palaces, and were evidently placed there for consultation, much as we go to a library to consult books. These very ancient writings were not found in the form of books, but on tablets of clay, and contained records of trade agreements, religious ceremonies, and civil and political events of some importance. Ancient Egypt, too, had her libraries. Her books, however, were not written on clay tablets, but in ink on rolls of papyrus.

Before printing was introduced, practically the only libraries to be found in our country were those connected with monasteries and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and none of these libraries could be called large, if compared with those of to-day. As you know, before Caxton set up his printing press at Westminster in 1476, all books were produced by hand—a very slow and costly process. As a result of the introduction of printing the number of books not only increased tremendously, but they became much cheaper. About the same time as printing was introduced into England the new learning from the East made itself felt, with its demand for more books. From that time there began that movement which has led to the foundation of the public libraries of to-day.

Unfortunately with the dissolution of the monasteries in the Tudor period their libraries were scattered and numbers of books were lost and even destroyed. Many, however, found their way into the college libraries at Oxford and Cambridge, which during the seventeenth century were, with

few exceptions, the only ones in existence. Things, however, changed in the eighteenth century. Libraries extended, but still only privately. No nobleman, or gentleman of standing, was without his collection of books, and his library was an important room. Gentlemen too set up village libraries for the benefit of their poorer neighbours.



PRIVATE LIBRARY AT KEN WOOD

*By courtesy of the London County Council*

The beginning of the nineteenth century showed generally an awakened interest in education. Societies were formed for the advancement of learning in general and science in particular. Lectures were given to their fellow members which awakened in the hearers a curiosity, and a desire for further knowledge of a subject, which in turn led to the purchase of books for the library. Booksellers, too, lent books on payment of subscriptions, as is done by many to-day. But these privileges could only be enjoyed by people who were in a position to pay for them, and were beyond the means of a working man.

In 1800, Dr. George Birkbeck was giving, at the University of Glasgow, a series of lectures to Glasgow mechanics. To illustrate his lecture he needed some simple scientific apparatus which had to be specially made for him, and this was done by the mechanics to whom he was lecturing.

Dr. Birkbeck was so struck by the keenness of the men to understand more of the principles they employed in making the instruments that he formed classes for their instruction. This began a movement which resulted in mechanics institutes for working-men's study and recreation springing up everywhere. At the time the Public Libraries Act was passed 400 such institutes had been established.

The voluntary libraries were not yet within the reach of all, who were wishful of serious reading. It was seen by many people that these needs could only be met by the provision of public libraries, and so a Bill for establishing them was introduced in 1850.

The 1850 Act did not give much encouragement to people

keen on the question of public libraries. It was to apply only to boroughs with a population of 10,000 or over. A public library could not be formed without the consent of a meeting of ratepayers, and not then unless there was a two-thirds majority of those present. Not more than the proceeds of a halfpenny rate could be spent on the library each year, and none of this money was to be spent on the provision of books. These were to be obtained from people who would be good enough to give them.

A few towns decided to provide public libraries, but many towns did not.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### **Public Libraries (*Contd.*)**

#### **The Growth of Public Libraries**

In 1855 another Act was passed which authorized the raising of a penny rate for library purposes and empowered authorities with a population of 5,000 to establish public libraries. The embargo on the purchase of books, too, was removed. Although several public library Acts were passed it was not until 1919 that Parliament gave permission to local authorities to spend more than a penny rate would produce.

One can easily understand that before 1919 when all the expenses of administering a public library, and, in many places, those of branch libraries also, had been met, not a great amount would be left for purchase of books. It is

interesting to note that from 1850 to 1890, 155 public libraries were established in the United Kingdom, and between 1890 and 1910, 271 more libraries were built. These figures show a great speeding-up in the establishment of public libraries during the latter period. This was almost directly due to the generosity of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, an American millionaire of humble Scottish birth.

As a youth Carnegie had been given the run of the library of a Col. Anderson, of Alleghany. He always remembered this kindness and the good which resulted to him because of it, and when he became possessed of great wealth he determined that any poor lad should be given the opportunity of enjoying the same privileges. So a great part of his wealth was spent in the erection of public libraries. When Mr. Carnegie died in 1919 there were 318 separate buildings in the United Kingdom which had been erected through help given by him. In granting money for the building of a public library, he made it a condition of grant, that the local authority, to which it was made, should provide the site for the building and that it should adopt the Public Libraries Act and maintain the library out of public funds.

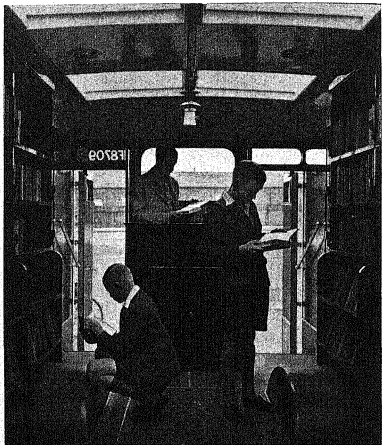
The good work commenced by Mr. Carnegie is still carried on through the operation of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, in which in 1918 he vested over £2,000,000. The interest of the fund, he directed, should be applied "to the improvement of the well-being of the masses of the people of Great Britain and Ireland." Libraries, he considered, as "entitled to a first place as instruments for the elevation of the masses of the people."

Before the outbreak of World War I not much had been done to provide libraries in rural districts. Although the Libraries Act had been extended to include parishes, the parish was altogether too small for a penny rate to produce sufficient money for the carrying on of a library with efficiency, and only a few parishes adopted it. The Library Act of 1919 gave county councils the power to form public libraries and this helped the rural districts.

The county councils were more fortunately placed than the first boroughs had been when they were establishing libraries because they could spend what money they felt was needed, so that in a short while every county in England had its central library. In addition, the counties had a fund to draw from—the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. This Trust offered money to pay the cost of maintenance for the first five years, on condition that after that time had elapsed the library would be kept up out of a county rate.

The county library system includes the formation of a central collection of books, from which sets of books are distributed throughout the county. At some centre in the parish, the inhabitants may come to receive and return books. Frequently this centre is the village school, at which the school master or schoolmistress gives voluntary service as librarian. In a few counties this system has been improved by the use of a library van, which visits villages at certain periods. (See p. 114.)

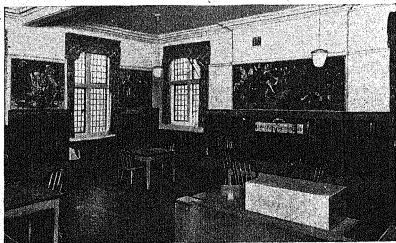
An important side of the work of a modern borough library is that in connection with young readers. Many borough libraries have a room set aside for children. These



A TRAVELLING LIBRARY VAN

*By courtesy of C. E. Haslam*

rooms are comfortably furnished, and there is a member of the library staff in charge to guide the young readers. A part, too, of the lending library is set aside as a juvenile section, from which children may borrow books to read in their own homes.



CHILDREN'S ROOM IN THE KENSAL RISE LIBRARY, WILLESDEN

The mural decorations on the walls were executed by students of the Willesden School of Art.

*By courtesy of the Willesden Corporation*

From the early days of the school boards a connection was made between the public library and the school. A collection of books is sent to each school taking part in the scheme. These books remain in the school for periods varying from three to six months, and are used by the pupils either for reading at home or in school. At the end of the period the books are returned to the central library and changed for a new set,



which is usually made up after a talk between the librarian and the teacher.

The increasing use which is being made of the public library by all sorts of people is a matter for pleasure and satisfaction. Probably one factor, which has made the public library extremely popular is the "open access" system by which a borrower may go to the shelves, and look through books, before finally choosing one which he feels would suit his needs. This system brings the staff of the library and the borrower together. The latter can get that help which members of the staff are always willing, and able, to give.

The following quotation sums up excellently the value of a public library. It is rather a difficult passage but it is worth while to make an effort to understand what it says.

"The library gives assistance for students of all ages and vocations, for those desirous of using their leisure to the best advantage, for those who seek true recreation, for the professional, commercial, technical, and scientific workers whose success is the success of the country, for the unemployed, the sick, the unfortunate, for the children, for the ordinary man in the street who has curiosity and would know, for the specialist who asks that the material of research and scholarship shall be at his command, for the lover of art, the dreamer, the idealist, even for the crank—for all, indeed, who have any use for knowledge, ideas, or imaginings."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Public Museums and Art Galleries

#### Their Development and Use

In many places the public library, museum, and art gallery form one building. The Act empowering boroughs to establish public museums was passed in 1845, five years before the Public Libraries Act. The history of the library, however, is considerably longer than that of the museum. The beginnings of libraries are lost in the mists of time while the museum dates only from the sixteenth century.

The spirit of curiosity which the revival of learning aroused showed itself in the collections of objects of a past age which were made by princes, noblemen, persons of wealth, and by scholars. Still, these collections were only private ones, made by persons who wished to satisfy their own tastes, and with no idea of instructing other people by means of them.

Perhaps the first collection got together for the purposes of instruction, and to which was given the name of museum, was housed in Lambeth. A father and son had collected many coins and miscellaneous curiosities, and many natural history specimens. These were arranged, not in haphazard fashion but under their own classes. A catalogue of the collection was published by the son in 1656. Three years later the collection was presented to Elias Ashmole, who in turn presented it to the University of Oxford in 1677, along with a collection which he himself had made. These collections can still be seen at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

To another private collector, Sir Hans Sloane, we owe the beginnings of our great National Museum—the British Museum. On his death in 1753, Sir Hans left his valuable collections of natural history, specimens, coins, miniatures, and pictures, to the nation on payment of £20,000. Parliament voted the money for the purchase, and so the British Museum began its long career of usefulness in the service of education and the promotion of knowledge.

The British Museum is called a National Museum because it is maintained by the State, that is by the Nation as a whole. Museums which are maintained by local authorities are known as Local Museums.

The love of collecting seems natural to numbers of Englishmen, and during the eighteenth century the increase of wealth gave many the opportunity of making private collections which eventually found their way into the public museums.

In 1845 was passed the first Public Museums Act, which gave authority to boroughs with a population of 10,000 or more to levy a rate not exceeding one-halfpenny in the £ for the erection and maintenance of museums of art and science. A charge might be made for admission but this was not to exceed a penny per head.

Many of the societies which were founded for the advancement of knowledge established museums as well as libraries. Despite the fact that the development of public museums was hampered through lack of funds, the number of public museums gradually increased and there are now over 300 rate-supported museums and art galleries in the country.

In 1919, Parliament passed an Act which abolished the restriction of the museums rate to one penny in the pound and from that time on local authorities have been free to spend what they think necessary on their museums and art galleries.

After this brief sketch of the history of museums we may well ask ourselves: What useful object do museums and art galleries serve? In the first place they tend to widen a person's interests, and one expects educated men and women to be interested in many things. In the second place, they add to one's store of knowledge itself directly by spurring people on to further discoveries. In the third place, one can find in them something to satisfy the love of the beautiful which is felt by most people.

The position of the curator of the museum is very important. His museum may be in a district which is rich in historical remains, or which has played some important part in the history of the country. He will have a room in which such remains could be shown, along with other objects of local historical importance.

Another room will house a collection which will give the visitor some clear idea of the bird life and plant life of the neighbourhood, and something of its geology. Again he would have in another place exhibits connected with the industries of the locality, both past and present.

The curator can foster a civic pride and interest in one's home surroundings by a well-chosen set of portraits of men and women who have been of service to their town and county. He will, too, have collections of pictures by local artists who have attained distinction in their calling, as well

as pictures of merit by other great artists, chosen and exhibited on some definite plan.

Having in mind the help he can be to schools, he will probably have a room in which the exhibits will be of geographical, historical, or scientific interest, to which the teacher could refer his pupils in the course of his lessons.

From time to time, too, he will arrange exhibitions of pictures and special articles borrowed from some of the national museums like the British Museum.

This brief sketch of the work of the curator will show you how important it is and that it plays no small part in the fuller education of a citizen.

A chapter on public museums and their development could not be closed without reference being made to the great help which the trustees of the Carnegie United Kingdom Fund have given to the museums movement, particularly through the grants of money made by them for building purposes.

## CHAPTER XXV

### Highways

#### From Early Times to the Seventeenth Century

A further glance at the Rate Demand Note on page 8 will show us that a good part of the general rate is set aside for the upkeep of highways.

A highway is a public road which all the King's subjects have the right to use. A road is defined as an ordinary line of communication between different places, used by travellers on foot, or horseback, or by vehicles. A street in turn is defined as a road, running between two lines of houses or shops. From this it will be seen that the term highway includes both roads and streets. For the upkeep of these roads and streets rates must be paid.

A public footpath over which the public may pass on foot only is a highway. So is a bridle-path, over which the public have a right to ride on horseback. There are some paths over which cattle may be driven as a right, and these are called driftways.

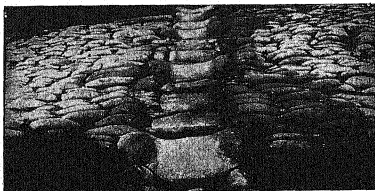
"The story of the King's Highway" is a most interesting one. Probably mention of the King's Highway brings to your mind the quiet and leisurely wending of the pilgrims in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* or the exploits of Dick Turpin and his brother highwaymen, or the bustle and excitement of old inns and hostelryes on the arrival of a stage coach.

In this island home of ours the earliest highways of which we know were those of the Ancient Britons. These simply led from one settlement to another and were just trackways along which man and animals passed. These trackways ran along ridges of high ground down to those parts of a river, which were easily forded, or maybe to the ports along the English Channel where the Britons of the south traded with the Continent. Men who have made a study of early history tell us that numbers of footpaths, field paths, and bridle-paths, over which there is a right of way at the present time, can be traced back to these ancient British trackways.

When the Romans came and conquered Britain, they made such good roads that their soldiers could move easily from one part of the country to another, and which at the same time, made it easier for traders to carry on business. The Romans were great engineers. Some of their roads were so well constructed that even to-day portions remain, as part of our great road systems. Their roads were built on a straight course. They carried them across rivers by bridges which lasted for centuries. These Roman roads had some of the features which are well known to road users of to-day. Distances then, as now, were indicated by milestones and at regular intervals were to be found posting stations, at which a stay could be made for the night. As these Roman roads were so well constructed it may be a matter for wonder that, in later history, we read but little of their use.

They were allowed to fall into disuse owing to the mode of life of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers who had no use for them. As the Saxons spread over Britain, they settled in

small groups, separated at some distance from each other. In looking about to see where they should live the Saxons selected places near which they could get water, easily, either from springs or rivers, and near cleared spaces which offered them shelter from the winds. This mode of life did not make for much intercourse, and a track was all that was wanted from one place to another. As time passed, and small towns sprang up, something more than tracks was required to connect these places, and to make trading easier between them. So we again come to roads.



PART OF AN OLD ROMAN ROAD SHOWING THE SKILL OF ROMAN ROAD-MAKERS

The road-makers of these later times had not the skill of the Romans. Their roads were not so well made, and were in constant need of repair. Roads which great landowners needed to use frequently were generally kept in fairly good condition, as were the roads which connected places at which were held the great fairs. But many roads were often



too much neglected, and accidents frequently occurred.

Roads are now maintained by local governing authorities but then it was the duty of those who owned the land on each side of a road to see that it was kept in a proper state of repair. If these landowners were not pressed by some person high in authority, who used a particular road, they did not take much, if any, trouble to see that it was kept in a passable condition. Floods, too, were frequent on the roads as people then did not know how to keep them drained. After continued rain, or after a heavy fall of snow, it was impossible even for riders on good horses to pass over them. People were often prevented from carrying their dead to a churchyard for burial and once during the reign of Edward III, Parliament was unable to meet at an arranged time, as the members could not travel to London because of the bad state of the roads.

England, too, in the thirteenth century was still well covered with forest land, and, where a road ran near woodland, all brushwood on either side of it for a distance of two hundred feet had to be cleared so that travellers should be safe from sudden or unforeseen attack.

During the Tudor period the condition of the roads had become so bad, that Parliament passed in 1555 an Act which remained in force for nearly three hundred years, and which laid down regulations for the upkeep of roads. This Act created a new office, that of Surveyor of Highways. He was to be an unpaid official, chosen by the inhabitants of his own parish to serve as surveyor for one year.

The Act laid it down that an occupier of land had to

provide or send "one wain or cart furbished after the custom of the country with oxen, horses or other cattle and all other necessities meet to carry things for that purpose and also two able men with the same." Also "every other householder, cottager and labourer able to labour and being no hired servant by the year" was either to go himself to work or pay a substitute to work for him.

It was the duty of the surveyor to fix at what times these various people would be called upon for the work required of them. Their hours of labour were to be for eight hours a day for six days in the year. It is not difficult to see that such an Act would not be a success in its working. The occupier of land took care, as a general rule, to send only his oldest, or laziest workers, and with them those horses and wagons for which he had but little use. The men themselves did not trouble how they worked, they did as little as possible and frequently came late, as they knew they would not be dismissed, and were not likely to be punished.

The Highways Act of 1555 did not accomplish all that was expected of it. The roads were left to each parish to repair, and the parishes usually did as little as possible. In many places a mere quagmire took the place of the road. Young and active men, and sometimes ladies, travelled on horseback, and goods of no great weight were carried on pack-horses. The family coach was dragged by six horses, and often sank so deeply in the mud as only to be extricated by the loan of additional plough horses from a neighbouring farm, whilst heavy goods were conveyed in lumbering wagons, still more difficult to move even at a moderate speed.

For passengers who could not afford to keep a coach the carrier's wagon served as a slow conveyance : but before the end of the reign of Charles II there had been introduced a vehicle known as The Flying Coach, which managed to perform a journey of fifty miles a day in summer and thirty in winter, in districts in which roads were exceptionally good.



COACHING DAYS IN ENGLAND

The steady increase of trade led to the system of pack-horses for the carriage of goods about the country. It was not unusual for a row of horses to be seen following one after another in single file, heavily laden with merchandise, making their way along with bells tinkling, so that travellers should be aware of their approach. This system of pack-horses led to the construction, alongside the roads, of narrow stone-covered causeways, which were just wide enough for a horse to walk upon. Trade, however, between place and place was bound to be restricted unless the use of wheeled vehicles could be extended, and the roads made better for wagons and carriages to pass over.

## CHAPTER XXVI

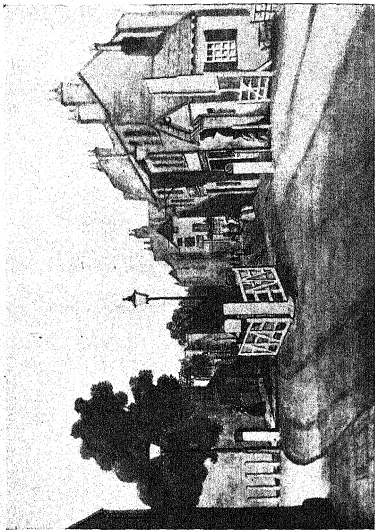
### Highways (*Contd.*)

#### From Stage Coach to Motor-Car

It was clear that the system of unpaid labour for road repair would not do to meet the growing needs of trade. So a further step forward was taken in road control when Parliament passed in 1663 the first Turnpike Act which authorized the setting up of Turnpike Trusts. A Trust was to keep in good repair a section of a road which was largely used by the new traders and travellers.

These travellers were to pay for the upkeep and improvement of roads by payments of tolls for the use thereof. At intervals on a road a toll-house was built and here across the road a barrier, usually in the form of a large gate, was swung. This was kept closed and the traveller was not allowed to pass, until he had paid the toll to the toll-house keeper. For many years now tolls have been abolished, but some of the old toll-houses still remain.

The system of turnpike roads did not become general for some time, in fact not for nearly one hundred years. Then considerable numbers of them came into use. Between the years 1760 and 1774 no fewer than 4,500 separate Turnpike Acts were passed. These turnpike roads were certainly much better than the old parish roads but still were far from satisfactory. One traveller has left it on record that in eighteen miles of turnpike road, between two manufacturing towns in Lancashire, he measured ruts some feet deep, and



AN OLD TURNPIKE ROAD  
Notting Hill Turnpike Gate in 1837

passed several carts left broken as a result of the bad condition of the roads.

Turnpike roads had certainly produced improvement. But the real point had not been touched, the science of road making, which was not studied till near the end of the eighteenth century. One of the first people to take up the study of road-making was a blind engineer, John Metcalfe. He was followed in his work by Thomas Telford, and John Macadam, the latter of whom has given to our language the word macadamize applied to the making of roads. Macadam's system of making and repairing roads was to work together into one solid mass, several layers of stone of nearly uniform size. In order, too, to provide for the better drainage of roads Macadam had them made convex. Alongside the roads he cut open ditches so that the water from the roads could be carried away, and where necessary he had drains laid below the surface of the roads.

You will remember that the Act of 1555 provided for unpaid labour on the roads. This Act made difficulties for Macadam in his road-making. Not until 1835 was unpaid labour abolished by a General Highways Act passed in that year. After 1835, labour, paid for by wages, could be fully made use of in the construction of roads.

As a result of the vast improvement in road-making, stage coaches, postchaises, and private carriages could be numbered in thousands using the roads, until there befell what a writer living at the time called "the calamity of railways." Many people then living, looked upon the advent of railways as a disaster. For a time people were rather

fearsome of travelling by train. It may seem strange to us that many persons living one hundred years ago thought that to travel at a speed of thirty miles an hour would be very dangerous. This feeling, however, did not last long, and, when a railway was opened between two places, people soon saw the advantage of being able to do a journey in one-third the time which would be taken by a stage coach, and, what was just as important, at a much cheaper cost.

As far as the stage coaches were concerned railways were certainly a "calamity." For some years they kept on the roads but one by one they disappeared. The competition of the railways was too much for them. The year 1839 saw the last stage coach run between London and Bristol. One stage coach, however, did keep the road until the year 1858—that between Manchester and Derby.

In turn too "the calamity of railways" was felt by the Turnpike Trusts. The main roads were now so little used that the tolls taken on them scarcely paid the wages of the collectors, let alone the cost of the upkeep of the roads. But if the Turnpike Trusts could no longer maintain the roads, some other body of people had to do so.

By-roads had continued to be the care of parishes as laid down by the Tudor Act of 1555. At the time of the coming of the railways there were 105,000 miles of road, mainly by-roads, which were looked after by the parishes of the country. As the Turnpike Trusts gave up their roads, it became the duty of a parish to maintain that part of a turnpike road which ran through its area.

Fifteen thousand parishes in England and Wales controlled

the roads of the country, and one can see, very easily, how the quality of these roads would vary in different parts, according to the care and trouble taken over them by the different parishes. Roads still needed great care, for although the railways absorbed the long distance road traffic, great use was yet made of the roads between various country places, and for the carrying of goods to villages which the railways did not reach.

It would have seemed a wise thing for parishes to combine for charge of the roads, and for them to have engaged a skilled surveyor to look after them. But so much jealousy existed between the parishes that it was not until 1864 that an Act of Parliament was passed combining parishes for the care of the roads. Control of the roads by combinations of parishes continued until the year 1894, when by another Act of Parliament two new local governing bodies were set up, Urban District Councils and Rural District Councils. These two new bodies took control over all roads in their districts, with the exception of the main roads, the care of which was the work of the county councils.

During the last ten years of the nineteenth century, it might have been foreseen, that these changes in road control, good as they were, could not last long. A new vehicle was making its appearance on the roads—the motor-car.

Motor vehicles developed so rapidly that it was soon evident that the roads would again be used for long distance traffic. It was to be seen, too, that as these motor vehicles would be able to carry much heavier loads than horse-drawn vehicles had done, the macadamized roads would not meet



the needs of the new century. But just as Telford and Macadam had come along in the early nineteenth century, so in the twentieth century there appeared the new road-makers, the municipal and county engineers, employed by the local authorities, who were to improve the roads, so as to meet new needs and to make heavier traffic possible.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### Highways (*Contd.*)

#### The Increase of Motor Traffic and the Care of Streets

The question of highways has ceased to be a local one, it has become of national importance. With the increase of motor traffic on the highways it was clear, that many of the roads were not able to meet the new conditions. Some roads were not wide enough, and many had awkward corners, which were difficult for large motor vehicles to get round. It was evident, too, that some new roads would have to be made. In 1909 Parliament set up a body known as the Road Board, whose work it was to assist, and encourage, local governing bodies to make these needful improvements.

You will remember that, when the first Turnpike Act was passed, it was urged that those who used the roads most, should pay most towards their upkeep by payment of tolls. The same principle was put into practice once again. The Road Board was to get the revenue, that would enable it to assist local authorities, from payments made for motor vehicle licences, driving licences and from duty paid on motor spirit.

For ten years, that is until 1919, the Road Board continued its work. This board was limited in what it could undertake. It could only make grants towards the improvement of roads, and with the increase of long distance and heavy traffic on the roads, most of the revenue went to the county councils, who had the care of the main roads. At the end of World War I, the Road Board was abolished, and in its place the Ministry of Transport established. The traffic on the roads had grown to such an extent that a special Government department was needed to take control of it. Much more authority was given to the Ministry than had been given to the Road Board. It was empowered to have new roads made, and new bridges too, and to encourage local authorities to make them the Ministry could pay up to 80 per cent of the cost of making. Roads, too, were classified as Class A and Class B roads and for the upkeep of Class A roads, grants somewhat larger in amount than those for Class B roads were made to local authorities for their upkeep.

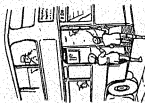
Much attention was being given to the question of the roads. But safety was very important and in 1930 Parliament passed The Road Traffic Act. The country was divided into eleven areas, the traffic of each area to be regulated by three commissioners, who were to co-operate with the local authorities and the Ministry of Transport.

Despite the work which is done by the traffic commissioners and the Ministry of Transport, much still remains for the local authorities to do. It is they who have to deal with all offences against motoring regulations, and to see to any traffic difficulties which arise within their areas. It is the

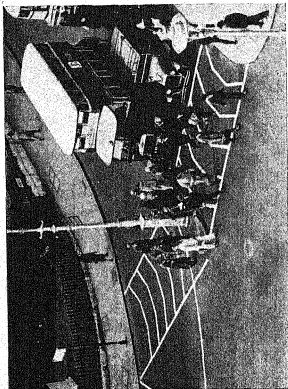
## Safety First



Signal when turning



Wait till the bus stops



USE THE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

For



Look for oncoming traffic



Keep to the kerb and ride clear of other traffic

engineers and surveyors of local authorities whose work it is to see to the fixing of automatic signals for control of traffic, where roads or streets cross. Where no such signals are fixed there a policeman is placed. It is the local authorities who see to the painting of the white lines on roads, and especially at bends of roads, to help the motorist in safe driving. By such signs as "Dead Slow," "Major Road Ahead" a motorist may know where he must take special care, and by the sign "30" that he is entering upon a built-up area, where his speed must not exceed thirty miles an hour.

So that it shall be easier, and safer, for pedestrians to cross a street where there is much through traffic, special crossings have been made. These crossings are shown by two white lines some feet apart. To indicate where the crossings are, at each side of the road, is placed a beacon. These beacons are known as Belisha beacons after the name of Mr. Hore Belisha who, when Minister of Transport, introduced them.

Despite all that has been done to make the roads safe, the loss of life on them is still very heavy.

To make people realise the new conditions on the roads, a copy of the Highway Code was placed in every home. It contains full advice on road conduct for all users of motor vehicles, motor cyclists, cyclists, pedestrians, drivers of horse-drawn vehicles, and to riders and persons in charge of led horses or other animals, in the hope that such advice "would prevent that kind of mistake, or thoughtless action, which may result in someone's bereavement or suffering."

These words from the foreword of the Highway Code are worth remembering. "In every human activity there is a standard of conduct, to which, in the common interest, we are expected to conform. This Code is the standard of conduct for the road. Respect for the Code, and for the spirit underlying it, is so much a moral duty that its practice should become a habit and its breach a reproach."

And now a word about streets in towns or villages. A description of a town street, in the olden days, would give you some idea of the benefits you now get from the payment of rates in the way of the well-kept, and well-made, streets of to-day. In olden days streets were littered with stones scattered about anyhow. In summer, clouds of dust swept through the streets; in winter one could scarcely walk through them, because of the mud.

About the end of the thirteenth century the streets of a few towns were paved with stones, but this was not general, for we read that in 1353, Edward III ordered the paving of a main street in London, the cost of which was to be borne by the owners of the houses, on each side of the street, because "it was so full of holes and bogs that the traffic had become dangerous for men and horses and carriages."

Little advance was made in the make-up of streets until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The pioneer work of Macadam was, of course, improved upon as the years passed, and new conditions had to be met. In order to strengthen them, some streets were paved with granite setts, or cobblestones. Streets paved in this way were very noisy, owing to the passage of heavy vehicles. To keep down the noise the

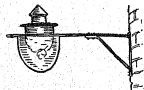
next step was to pave the main thoroughfares with blocks of hard wood set in a foundation of concrete and cement. These, however, wore out somewhat speedily, and the more important streets in our large towns are now laid with asphalt, which is proving more durable, and which is easier to repair.

Besides the necessity for repair, caused by the wear and tear of traffic, streets at times have to be opened up to mend the sewers running under them, or the mains through which water, gas and electricity are supplied. It is one of the problems of road surveyors and engineers, how to get repair work done as soon as possible so that there should not be any undue disturbance of traffic. To prevent lengthy interference, surveyors are now making use of quick-setting cements, which have reduced the length of time which it is necessary to have a road closed for reconstruction.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Street Lighting

Another item on a rate demand note is that of street lighting. This may seem of little importance, compared with the items which have already been dealt with ; but if you were to have a talk with people of 60 to 70 years of age, you would probably learn something from them of the improvement which has been made in street lighting during their lifetime.



In olden times the only method of lighting streets was by means of candles and oil lamps (vegetable oil) and many side streets were not lighted at all. It only needs a little imagination to picture the gloom of our towns 150 years or more ago compared with the brightness and light of the present days. But about 1800 there was promise of change. In 1792 Wm. Murdoch, a Scotsman, then living in Redruth, Cornwall, lighted his house with coal gas, produced in iron retorts, and carried in metal pipes for a distance of some 70 feet.

It was not long before numbers of buildings and factories were lit by gas, but it was not until 1806 that it was employed for use in street lighting. In that year Samuel Clegg illuminated King Street, in Manchester, by means of a gas lamp, and the example he set was soon followed, for in 1807 Pall Mall, in London, was also lighted by gas. The revolution in street lighting, which was to lead to the brightness and comfort of the present day, had commenced.

Could we carry ourselves back in time to the days of Queen Elizabeth, we should then find that the only source of artificial lighting was the tallow candle. We should find, too, that the candles used were not so well made as those we use to-day, and that they had much less lighting power.

When people travelled about the streets after dark they had to carry lights with them, much as one sees people doing to-day in some of the remoter country districts. There had been little, if any, change from mediæval times, when the pedestrian carried a long torch with him should he be out at night. This torch was made of tow, which had been

steeped in resin. Or, maybe, he carried a lanthorn enclosing a tallow candle. Small wonder is it that the people of these centuries did not care to make even small journeys by night





as, in addition to the discomfort of walking in ill-paved, or unpaved, ill-lit streets, there was always the danger of their being pounced upon by robbers, who lurked in the darkness under cover of the overhanging houses.

Tallow played an important part in the social life of the country, right on to the eighteenth century. It was the duty of civic authorities to see there was always at hand a sufficient supply of tallow. If anyone should sell tallow contrary to the regulations he would most likely incur a heavy fine.

A chandler, that is a candle-maker, before setting up business had to enter into a bond of £20 guaranteeing that he would keep the regulations for the sale of tallow. If he broke them he would be further liable to a fine of £5. A butcher breaking regulations might be subject to a fine of £2. At the time these regulations were in force the fines were very heavy, for then, one pound would buy many more things than one pound would buy to-day.

It was because of the scarcity of tallow and the expense of lighting that there was no public illumination of streets, and that persons who wished to go out at night had to provide light for themselves.

An order issued by the Corporation of the City of London in 1716 is believed to be the first order relating to public street lighting. By it every householder was compelled to display a candle outside his door on dark or moonless nights. This candle was usually enclosed in a lanthorn, and was lighted from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. The compulsory duty of providing candles on dark nights was found to be a very irksome one to many citizens, and soon there entered on the

scene the contractor, who undertook to supply illumination to each householder on payment of six shillings per year.

In 1736 the Corporation of London went further and undertook themselves the lighting of streets by means of oil lamps, the cost of which was paid for out of the rates. The oil was made from cabbage seed. These lamps, in lighting effect, were not much of an improvement on candles set outside the doors, although they were only placed about thirty yards apart, and they should have burnt until 11 o'clock. Frequently they did not, as often the oil was stolen, or the lamps put out by the thieves who roamed the streets.

People who did venture abroad, often hired a link-boy with his torch.

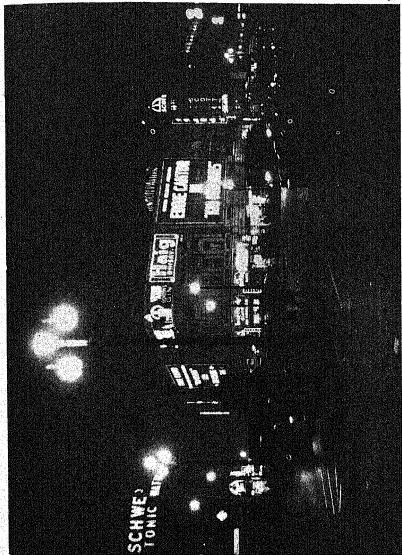
Later in the eighteenth century shopkeepers of London began to employ some of the arts of present-day advertising. As many shopkeepers of to-day contribute to the brightness of a town street by keeping the electric light on in their shop windows, so did the shopkeepers of London at the end of the eighteenth century begin to display their goods at night by placing candles inside their windows, and by so doing adding something to the brightness of the streets. A visitor from a provincial town, in a letter home to his family, spoke of the wonderful sight which he had seen of a London shop window being lighted by 22 candles.

After the successful experiment of Samuel Clegg in Manchester in 1806, and that of the lighting of the Pall Mall in the following year, street lighting by means of gas became the general method during the greater part of the nineteenth century, and was a great improvement on what had been

done before. But, judged by the standards of to-day, our streets were not even well lighted then, as the light in the gas lamps was that given by a naked flame. It was not until the last ten years of the nineteenth century that the successful experiments of Welsbach revolutionized the use of gas for lighting purposes by the introduction of the incandescent mantle.

About the same time, too, electricity began to be used for street lighting. In fact, as early as 1881 the first experiment in the lighting of streets by electricity was made in the small town of Godalming, in Surrey. More generally now the main streets of our big towns and cities are lit by electricity, though in many places, still, numbers of streets are lit by gas.

It cannot be doubted that one of the main causes which has led to the decrease of crime during the last forty years has been the better lighting of our streets. The advertising methods of to-day also add considerably to the brightness of our main streets at night. The development of electricity for flood-lighting and exterior lighting of all kinds, particularly in Neon display signs, has changed the night-time aspect in the streets of all large towns and cities. A quiet walk through a well-lit town is now one of the main pleasures of many people.



LONDON STREETS—PICCADILLY CIRCUS AT NIGHT

For

## CHAPTER XXIX

### Public Utility Services



GAS



ELECTRICITY



TRANSPORT

The supply of gas, electricity, and water, together with the transport services, are spoken of generally as "the public utility services." They are not paid for out of the general rate of a borough, and may or may not be supplied by the local authority. The other services are supplied only by local governing authorities, and are paid for out of the general rate.

The term public utility services, then, serves to make a distinction between those services which are paid for out of the general rate, and those which are paid for on a direct supply basis.



WATER

A person *must* use water and he must get it from somewhere or other. If he gets it from a company, or a local authority, he must pay for it to either body on receipt of a special demand note. He is not bound, however, to use either gas or electricity, whether supplied by

a company or by a local authority, but if he does so he pays for the amount which he has used.

In the same way he pays according to the distance he travels, whether on a company's bus or on a local authority's bus.

A person can do without the use of gas, electricity, or transport if he so wishes, and if he does so he pays nothing towards the cost of them. But whether or not he makes direct use of the services which are shown on a rate demand note he must pay his share of the cost of them through his general rate.

But whether public utility services be supplied by a local authority or by a company Parliament has seen to it, that the interests of the consumers, and of the general public, are carefully considered, as these services are necessary in the life of to-day.

With the exception of the water supply, the public utility services are of comparatively recent date. In 1792, William Murdoch first lighted his house with gas, and it is from this date we must trace the development of gas undertakings. His example was followed by the owners of mills and factories, who set up their own gas plant to illuminate their buildings. Nearly twenty years after Murdoch's successful experiment a company was formed for the supply of gas—the Chartered Gas Light and Coke Company, which began its operations in the Metropolis.

Other companies, for the supply of gas in London, soon followed, and these carried on business in competition with each other. In many towns were to be found two or more

companies supplying gas, which was now beginning to be looked upon as one of the needful things of life. In a few towns only, the chief of which was Manchester, did the town authorities take upon themselves to supply gas for general use.

Although competition might affect the price of gas, and keep it low, the quality of gas generally supplied did not give satisfaction to the consumers, and time came when the belief in competition in the supply of gas weakened. Companies began to amalgamate, but such conditions were laid upon them by Parliament as safeguarded the interests of the public—a further indication that the public utility service must be operated for the benefit of the public and not alone for gain for the companies.

As the belief in competition weakened, the opinion strengthened that gas undertakings should be owned and operated by municipalities for the benefit of the public, and so from 1850 onwards there was a steady purchase of company concerns by the various corporations. At the present time just over one-third of the gas undertakings are owned by municipalities. It is interesting to note the geographical distribution of gas undertakings. In the South of England most of these undertakings are owned by companies. In the North of England and in Scotland gas is mainly supplied by the municipalities.

As we have already seen, gas was first used as a means of lighting. With the passing of the years, however, experiments in the use of gas were made in other directions, mainly for cooking purposes and in the warming of rooms.

Dwelling houses can now command, at all times of the

day and night, an ample supply of hot water. The use, too, of the incandescent mantle has provided better street lighting and road illumination and better lighting of buildings.

Gas is being largely and increasingly used for industrial purposes. This further use of gas is still likely to extend as a consequence of the research work which is being carried on as to the various uses to which gas may be put.

The development in the use of gas for household purposes has been very much helped by the policy both of the municipalities and of the companies. Householders who do not wish to buy their own cooking stoves, gas fires, geysers, and other useful articles, can have them on loan at a moderate rental, with little, if any, cost for fixing them. People who wish to own these things can buy them on a hire purchase system which means that, after a certain number of payments, made over a term of months or years, these articles become their own.

Many householders now pay for the gas they have used at the end of each quarter and the amount of gas consumed is indicated by a meter. Many also use the slot meter, which is worked on the principle of a slot machine. Some of these meters take a penny, some sixpence, some a shilling. The insertion of a coin provides for a supply of gas to the value of the coin. By this means people are able to pay for the gas they need as they use it, and have not to pay a large bill at the end of three months' time. These methods, of course, promote the business of gas undertakings, but at the same time are certainly helpful, too, to householders who use gas.

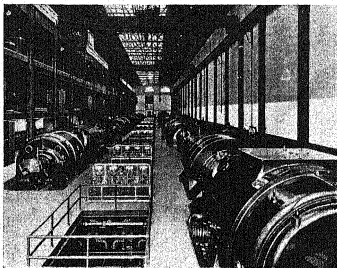


## CHAPTER XXX

### Public Utility Services (*Contd.*)

#### Electricity

When gas undertakings were first established the general feeling was that such work was not of the kind which a municipality ought to carry out. But about the year 1880, when it was found possible to make use of electricity for lighting purposes, public opinion had changed. It was now felt that it was the duty of a municipality to supply electricity for town purposes.



LOTS ROAD GENERATING STATION

*By courtesy of the London Passenger Transport Board*

Even where municipalities did not at first establish electricity undertakings powers were conferred upon them, which gave them the right, at the end of 21 years, to buy the undertakings from the private companies, which should have set them up. They were to be required to pay only for the property of the company, without consideration for goodwill, or for the profits which might be expected to be made. But many people were of the opinion that 21 years was too short a time for the life of a company, and so later the period was extended by Parliament to 42 years.

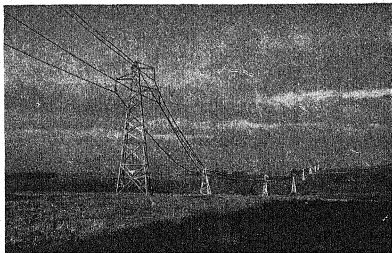
Thus, when the history of gas supply and the history of electricity supply are compared it will be seen that the municipalities had none of the struggles over setting up their electricity undertakings which they had over the setting up of their gas undertakings.

During the last ten years of the nineteenth century the scope of the use of electricity extended, and we find it beginning to be used for purposes other than that of lighting, such as the driving of machinery in factories and workshops. The requirements arising from this extended use of electricity showed that local government bodies alone could not meet them, and so Parliament authorized the setting up of a number of private companies for the supplying of electric power for use in driving machinery, engines, and so on. These companies were given power to sell in bulk over large areas, not confined to one local governing authority, supplies of electricity where they were needed for power purposes; and, unlike the first companies, they were not to be compelled to sell their undertakings to any local governing authorities.

Experience showed that the establishment of these power companies did not conflict to any extent with the municipal undertakings. But indication has been given that the supply of electricity could not be restricted to limited areas as could gas. It was during World War I that the weakness of electricity supply over rather small areas was fully seen and that steps should be taken to reorganize the industry, not on local, but on national lines.

In 1919 a Board of Electricity Commissioners was set up. It was not until 1926, however, that something definite was done in the way of extended reorganization of electricity services. The whole question of the cheap and efficient production and distribution of electricity throughout the country was considered, and a far-reaching change was advised and acted upon. The generating side of the industry was placed under the control, but not the ownership, of the electricity board. This body was to concentrate production of electricity in the most suitable stations, and under selected producers. In the big generating stations to be set up, work could be carried out much more cheaply, and more efficiently, than in numerous small stations. The electricity board were to buy electricity from the producers, and sell it in bulk to authorized undertakers for distribution to consumers.

One effect of this reorganization, as far as the smaller municipalities and companies are concerned, is that now they need no longer busy themselves with the technical problems connected with the generation of electricity. So they are able now to give almost all their attention to problems connected with its distribution and upon service to the citizens



THE GRID SYSTEM—PYLONS

*By courtesy of the Central Electricity Board*

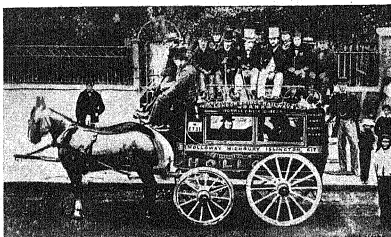
and townsfolk as consumers. By the linking up of towns and cities, which is accomplished by the high voltage lines which you see carried on large towers right across the country (a system popularly referred to as the "grid system"), the villages also can be benefited, as local authorities may, if they so wish, make arrangements for even small places to be supplied by the Central Electricity Board.

How the easy supply of electricity may affect life in some villages is shown in the following paragraph, which was taken from a fairly recent article in a London newspaper. The article referred to conditions in East Anglia.

"Village lanes are now brightly lit by electricity: illuminated signs on the village green, extolling the virtues of electricity, have replaced the parish pump and the village inns as centres of meeting and gossip. Electric lamps, cookers, irons, washing machines and vacuum cleaners are replacing coal fires, oil lamps and hard manual labour in farms and cottages. Hens are being induced to lay more eggs, and tomato houses to yield more produce, with the aid of electric light and heat: and cows are being milked, milk separated, corn threshed, hay cut, and turnips mashed, all by electricity."

In the same way as gas undertakings help householders, so do electricity undertakings make it easy for them to hire, or to purchase, things which make work less trying for the housewife, such as electric fires, electric cookers, electric water heaters, electric irons and electric cleaners. To those householders who have not got electricity installed in their homes, companies and local authorities give assistance by installing it for them and by arranging for the cost to be paid for by a certain number of quarterly payments.

Electricity, too, is now not only an important but practically an essential need in the modern equipment of hospitals, health centres, and clinics. Some authorities, too, use it largely for the heating of baths, libraries, schools and other public buildings. You are all aware of its use in tramway and trolley-bus systems, but not so apparent to everyone is the use made of it in water drainage and sewage disposal schemes. Electricity is also bringing new industries into new areas.



HORSE BUS, KNIFEBOARD TYPE

*By courtesy of the London Passenger Transport Board*

## CHAPTER XXXI

### Public Utility Services (*Contd.*)

#### Municipal Transport

Anywhere near the centre of a town or city you may observe numbers of people getting off omnibuses and trams, which have brought them from their homes in the suburbs and outlying districts and have landed them near to their shops, offices, workshops, schools, and so on. Such a sight is a comparatively modern one. Seventy to eighty years ago a scene like this would not have met the eye.

You will remember that one of the effects of the Industrial Revolution was the building of houses so close together that in many places even eighty houses were built to the acre.

People were crowded into small areas in the neighbourhood of their work.

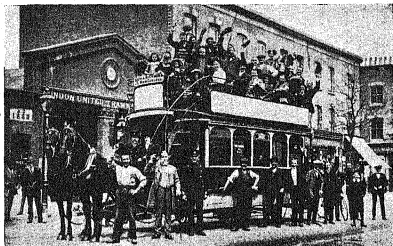
During the first half of the nineteenth century, you would have seen coaches in small numbers plying for hire, as do the taxi-cabs of to-day ; a few privately owned horse-omnibuses would be seen in the streets also.

But between 1860 and 1870, towns had begun to spread from their centres. More houses were built on the outskirts, and the necessity was felt for improved and cheap transport for the masses of the people, and something more reliable than the horse-omnibuses then in use.

It was during these years that we first read of tramcars drawn by horses. The example of the railways is evident in the use made of rails, which were sunk in the middle of the streets for the trams to run on. People who are getting into middle years of life will remember seeing horse trams. Some towns tried steam trams in place of horse-drawn cars.

There are one or two points of interest in the history of municipal transport in its early stages. You will remember that companies first supplied water and gas, and that the local authorities had difficulty in getting the companies to sell their undertakings. The lesson learnt then was a useful one, as the first Tramways Act of 1870 shows.

By this Act local governing bodies were given authority either to own their own tramway undertakings or to allow companies to be formed for the running of trams within their areas. But at the end of twenty-one years and, after that, at the end of certain stated periods, the local authorities could, if they so desired, purchase their tramway undertakings on



HORSE TRAM, GARDEN SEAT TYPE

*By courtesy of the London Passenger Transport Board*

the actual value of their trams and other property, without further compensation.

What will appear strange to us now is that although Parliament had given power for the municipal ownership of trams, it did not allow the local authorities to work them. This, it was felt, would be better done by a company, to whom the corporation would lease the undertaking.

In early days the Corporation of Huddersfield found its tramway undertaking lying idle on its hands, as no company could be found willing to lease it from them. So Huddersfield was forced to ask Parliament for leave to operate its own tramway system. This permission having been granted, it was not long before other places asked Parliament for a like privilege.



Huddersfield, too, gained early distinction for itself by being the first local authority to apply electricity to the running of trams, the success of which venture showed that the horse tram would not have a long life.

By the end of the nineteenth century the days of the old horse trams were practically over. They could not compete with the new electric cars for speed and smooth running. As about this time, too, many of the companies were coming near the end of their twenty-one years' permit to run tramcars, the transfer of their concerns to the municipalities was made easier. Electric trams, owned municipally, became general, and only a few private tramway companies remained.

About the end of the nineteenth century motor-cars were beginning to take to the roads. The first sign that this new form of road vehicle might become a rival to the still new electric tramcar was seen in 1904, when the Corporation of Todmorden, a Lancashire borough, began to use motor-buses for conveyance of passengers. From that time, until the outbreak of World War I, a number of other corporations began to use motor-buses also, not so much to displace trams as to act as "feeders" to them.

For example, when it was found that a district was opening up beyond a tram terminus, instead of continuing the tram lines, corporations operated motor-buses from that point farther on. They were used also to traverse a cross route which would connect two tram termini.

We had to wait for the years following on the close of the war for an increasing use of the motor omnibus, with a

consequent decreasing use of the tramcar. Indeed, during the last few years quite a number of corporations have given up their trams altogether and have replaced them with motor-buses. Generally speaking this is because passengers found the buses more comfortable to ride in, and the corporations found them somewhat cheaper to work. The fact, too, that they were more mobile was an advantage which buses had over trams, and also that they could convey passengers through streets in which it would not have been wise to lay tram lines.

The trolley-bus system was introduced into this country in 1911, by the Corporation of Bradford. Some towns have replaced their trams by trolley-buses. These buses use overhead wires as trams do, and, like trams, are driven by electricity. One great advantage which trolley-buses have in their running is that they are not confined to lines. It is possible for them, too, to traverse rather narrow streets through which it would not be advisable to allow trams to run.

Municipal transport was first thought of because towns were spreading outwards from their centres. Now we see the speed and comfort of present-day motor vehicles leading people to live well outside the confines of the towns in which they are employed. They are brought to their work by buses which are run by companies. These company buses on reaching town boundaries have to run over areas, which are served by the various corporations, and it is one of the present-day problems in many places how to prevent unnecessary competition and wasteful overlapping between the corporation buses and the company buses.

Buses, too, have brought the country nearer to the town by making it easy for country people to come to the town to do their shopping and to take advantage of the amenities that a town can provide. Some corporations have come to agreements with the bus companies so that services which supply the needs of a town, and the districts lying around a town, are operated by a joint board of management consisting of members of the corporation and members of the company. Modern transport is ignoring old boundaries. Social intercourse between town and town, between town and village, and between village and village is becoming closer, and this intercourse is something which should prove beneficial to everybody.

Recent legislation has taken away the Electricity and Transport Undertakings from local authorities, and put them under the control of the State. In other words, the industries have been nationalized. It is anticipated that the gas industry will also be nationalized, and readers will be able to keep in touch with developments from their newspapers.

These are important changes and the legislation is too recent for anyone to judge the results. It means, of course, that instead of these industries belonging to the ratepayers of a particular area they now belong to the taxpayer.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### Police

#### The beginnings of our famous Police System

An African chief who was asked, on his return home after a visit to London, what he thought was the most wonderful sight he had seen while away, replied, without hesitation, "The man in blue," meaning, of course, the London policeman. The London policeman is an object of wonder to many other foreign visitors also, as they see him

"With uplifted hand

Conducting the orchestral Strand."



Foreigners admire his courtesy and the quiet way he goes about his work, as he refuses at all times to become excited or perturbed. They are astonished, too, that he carries no firearms. Somewhere about him is a wooden truncheon, which he would use only when necessity compelled him to do so. He appears to the foreign visitor as just an ordinary citizen, a civilian, wearing a particular kind of uniform, and having some special duties to perform. And in thinking so the foreign visitor is not far wrong.

The policeman's office confers on him but few powers which are not possessed by citizens generally. He belongs to a civilian force, the origins of which date back even to Anglo-Saxon times.

In early times it was the duty of every member of the community to give help in preventing a breach of the peace. And in some measure this is so to-day, for if a policeman feels that he has need of assistance he can call upon any man standing by to help him. If this man should refuse to assist the policeman he can be summoned and tried for an offence against the law.

To-day, also, if a policeman arrests an offender he does so "in the King's name." Here is a phrase handed down to us from the times of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, when the King was looked upon as "the Guardian of the peace," as indeed he was. The King looked to each thane or landowner to keep the peace within the confines of his estate. The thane in turn passed on responsibility to the heads of homesteads who formed themselves into groups of ten, and who pledged their joint belongings as surety for the good behaviour of each member of the group. Every free man over the age of twelve had to belong to a tything, as this group of ten was called.

Ten tythings were formed into further groups called hundreds. At each meeting of the hundred a tything was represented by its head man. Again each member of the hundred pledged itself to assist in the maintenance of peace and good order within its area. Each head man might well be compared with the present-day policeman, for it was he who had to take oversight of conduct within the area of his tything.

The Norman Conquest brought with it changes, but the principle that it was the duty of a community to maintain peace within its own confines remained. The maintenance

of peace was still a local duty. The Norman overlords, however, had little respect for law and order, and consequently could not expect anything different from their vassals. As a result, Parliament, in 1285, in the reign of Edward I, passed a law, the famous Statute of Winchester, which was designed to put down disorder and to place the police system of the country on a sounder basis.

This Act followed the custom of the Anglo-Saxon times and made the hundred, which had now become a part of a county or shire, responsible for any offences committed within its boundaries.

In Norman times many towns had walls around them, and for the better maintenance of order within them the Statute of Winchester commanded that the gates of these towns be kept shut between the hours of sunset and daybreak. Between these hours no one was allowed to enter or to leave the town, and to carry out this order the gates had to be "warded," that is, guarded. Again, a town had to provide watchmen to watch or keep order in the streets by night. Each householder had to take his turn as a watchman, or, if not, to pay someone to take his place.

If a criminal should elude capture by the watch, and get free of a place, the inhabitants were bound to chase him with "hue and cry" into the next hundred where the pursuit would be taken up by the people of that district. This pursuit continued from hundred to hundred till the criminal gave himself up or "till he come to the sea."

In order to make travelling safe, brushwood was to be destroyed on either side of a public highway for a space of

200 feet to prevent robbers from making a sudden attack on any unwary traveller.

For the proper administration of this statute a new office was created, that of "Conservator of the Peace," or, "Justice of the Peace," an office which continues to the present day. For hundreds of years the justices were drawn from the ranks of the landed gentry, because of the influence which it was felt they would wield in their own district.

Following on the appointment of the justice of the peace we get the constable, whose duty it was to see that all wrong-doers were brought before the justice. He had to see that "watch and ward" was properly kept, to take into custody any evil-doers handed over to him by the watch and to set up the "hue and cry" after any escaping peace-breaker. The constable was to the justice as "eyes and hands."

As the years went on the custom that ordinary citizens should be compelled to take on police duties was felt to be more and more irksome. The great trade guilds introduced the practice of engaging their own paid officers to ward their markets and manufactures, and this example was followed by private citizens, who banded themselves together and engaged a person who should act for them and whom they paid.



DOCK POLICEMAN

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### Police (Contd.)

#### Towards our efficient Police System

Many statutes were passed for the purpose of maintaining good order, but the lack of efficient police control made these laws of little account.

The general system continued by which old, infirm, incapable, and often foolish and corrupt men were paid to perform police duties. If you read the famous Dogberry and Verges scene in Act III of *Much Ado About Nothing* you will see that in Shakespeare's time the watch must have been looked upon with some measure of ridicule and amusement. The following extract, taken from an oath administered to a constable in the time of James I, will show how old custom persisted :—

“If any offenders shall make resistance (with force) you shall levy Hue and Cry, and shall pursue them until they be taken. You shall do your best endeavour that the watch, in and about your hundred, be duly kept for the apprehending of Rogues, Vagabonds, Night Watchers Eavesdroppers, Scouts, and other suspected persons, and of such as go armed and the like, and that Hue and Cry be duly raised and pursued according to the Statute of Winchester against Murderers, Thieves, and other Felons.”



During the 18th century, robbery and violence increased to such a degree that the parish constable could not cope with it, and matters were not made any easier by the fact that many justices were known to be corrupt and open to bribery. The streets of the towns were infested by thieves and disturbed by the riotous conduct of "young men about town"—"the young bloods." A pamphlet published in the year 1712 says of the latter: "The watch in most of the out parts of the town stand in awe of them because they always come in a body, and are far too strong for them, and when any watchman presumes to demand where they are going they generally misuse them. Last night they had a general rendezvous, and were bent on mischief; their way is to meet people in the streets and stop them, and begin to banter them, and if they make any answer they lay on them with sticks and toss them from one to another in a very rude manner. They attacked the watch in Devereux Court and Essex Street and made them scower\*; they also slit two persons' noses and cut a woman in the arm that she is lam'd. They likewise rolled a woman in a tub down Snow Hill that was going to market, and set other women on their heads, misusing them in a barbarous manner."

For many years the old voluntary system had served a rural population fairly well. It could not cope with the problems of an increasing town life. We had to wait until the middle of the eighteenth century before the first step was taken towards a publicly-paid police force. Reform began through the efforts of Henry Fielding, one of our earliest

\* Scower means to look very angry.

novelists and a stipendiary, or paid magistrate, of Bow Street, London, whose work was continued by his half-brother, Sir John Fielding, who succeeded him in his office.

London, at that time particularly, was the haunt of criminals, and to deal with them Fielding organized a special force of constables who were to be at his call and who were to be paid by the Government—our first force to be paid for out of national funds. Because of the brisk way these constables carried out their work they became known as the "Bow Street runners."



JOHN TOWNSEND—  
THE BOW STREET RUNNER

Out of this emerged a system of patrols, whose work it was to prevent crime. But except for the limited area in which the Bow Street runners and the patrols operated, crime and disorderly conduct continued to increase to an alarming extent, and offences against the law went on, unchecked and unpunished, because there was no real police force to cope with them.

Private associations were set up to bring about the arrest of malefactors. Some towns followed the example of the Bow Street magistrates and established a sort of local police to be paid for by a borough rate, but what was done seemed of little avail to keep down the volume of crime. At the commencement of the nineteenth century it was

estimated that there was one criminal to every 22 of the population. Drastic punishments, which were thought would prevent crime, entirely failed in their object.



THE LAST OF THE PEPLERS

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel piloted through Parliament a Bill for the establishment of a paid police force for the Metropolitan area—the Metropolitan Police Force. The area to be operated by this force was to extend to a radius of 15 miles from Charing Cross. This force was to be under the immediate control of a department of the Central Government—the Home Office—and it remains so until the present day. It seems likely that the name of Sir Robert Peel will be perpetuated by the nicknames given to the police which he had brought into being, “Bobbies” and “Peplers.”

In 1835, every borough was required to provide its own police force, to be paid for out of the borough funds. This force was to be controlled by a committee of the borough council called the Watch Committee. Here we see an old name persisting.

Boroughs were allowed to do as they thought fit and some took this to mean that they should build a police force of some strength and did so, while others did very little.

Criminals made their way to places where there was likely to be least interference with their operations. The new railways, which were opening up the country, helped them to get away quickly from the place of their misdeeds. In the villages and parishes there was still the old parish constable, who was no match for the skilled criminal.

In 1839, an Act was passed authorizing the justices of the peace in a county to raise and equip a paid police force. This Act was not compulsory. In those counties which adopted the Act, there was progress towards efficiency, in the counties which preferred to continue the age-long practice of the parish constable there was stagnation.

It was soon seen, that unless all police forces throughout the country were equally efficient the new police could not work to the fullest advantage. Under a uniform system, only, could people feel sure of protection. It would not do for a criminal to feel more safe from capture in one part of a country than in another. Also the old idea that severe punishment would keep down crime was proved to be wrong. Public opinion decided that it would be better to prevent crime than to punish for it when it had been committed.

So in the year 1856 a new Act was passed which was compulsory throughout all parts of the country.

This Act made the justices of the peace, acting through the Quarter Sessions, responsible for its working in the counties. The Watch Committee continued to be the governing body in the boroughs.

In 1888, on the passing of the County Councils Act, the control of the police in the counties was transferred to a

standing joint committee, composed of an equal number of justices of the peace for the county and of county councillors. As a matter of history this change is an event of some importance. For more than five hundred years police in rural areas had been controlled by the justices of the peace for the county. Now they had to share their power with councillors, who had been elected by the vote of the people.

The 1856 Act is notable also because by it a new principle in police service was introduced, that of partial control by the Home Office—a department of the Central Government.

Each police force still remained a local affair. The work of the Home Office was to see, through the inspectors it appointed, that each police force reached a certain standard of efficiency.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### Police (*Contd.*)

#### The Police of To-day

The Act of 1856 laid the real foundations of our modern police system which has no superior in any country! How many people recognize the degree of care and forethought exercised and how much skill and knowledge are brought into play to protect the ordinary citizen. It would take too much space to go into all the details of organization which have placed us in the enviable position which is ours to-day.



MOUNTED POLICE Fox

becoming policemen.

The training given to a police recruit is not only educational and physical. He is also taught what are his duties to the public and how he should act towards them, and also what he should do in certain circumstances, for it must be remembered that a constable is generally placed alone on a beat and so must learn to rely on himself and to exercise his own judgment.

Great care is now exercised over the choice of men for the various police forces of the country. Not only must a candidate for a police force be a man of good physique, he must also be intelligent in order to fit him to meet the many problems which he is likely to encounter in carrying out his duties.

Conditions of service in the police forces are now such that many well educated men are

TRAFFIC MOTOR-CYCLE PATROL.  
*By courtesy of the Metropolitan Police*

To provide for this training some borough and county forces have established training centres of their own, and some in addition to training their own recruits undertake to train with them the recruits of other forces. This is very helpful to the smaller forces of the country.

The equipment of the modern police forces and the use made of modern science have helped towards that efficiency which is giving greater safety to the public. In the early days the equipment of the police was just as simple as were the needs of the people they served. To-day they are equipped to meet all the circumstances of modern life. A police force has instruments for the detection of crime. It has finger-prints and photographs and records of suspected persons. There is a capable scientist at the central police station, whose work it is to make chemical analyses of various substances, which may throw some light on a case which the police have in hand. His findings may help the police to prove a crime or otherwise. In these days of motor-cars and quick transit, the police, too, have their motor cycles and small cars for the pursuit of criminals.

The police out on their beats can get into touch with the central station speedily by means of the telephone boxes which are conveniently placed. Wireless communication is now in general use for more widely-extended areas.

Much has been done also in the introduction of common methods of working in the police system. More uniform conditions of service, too, exist as between one police force and another, while at the same time they remain independent of one another and entirely local in their management.

Real efficiency of service requires that at no time should any district suffer because of lack of police control. But emergencies do arise in various districts from time to time with which their ordinary police strength cannot cope. At such times, men may be lent from one force to another to add to the strength of the force needing it.

In times of great disorder, when the trouble becomes too much for the police to deal with, the military may be summoned to their help.

Whenever military aid is called for it is the practice of a civil magistrate to accompany the troops.

On occasion of necessity the police force of a district may be helped, or added to, by the enrolment of ordinary citizens to act as special constables. During World War I, many men enrolled as special constables to supplement the police forces, because so many of the regular police were away fighting. Usually these special constables can be obtained from men willing to act, but, if a sufficient number of volunteers is not forthcoming, magistrates may compel service on pain of a fine should anyone refuse. It is the duty of every man to assist in maintaining peace and good order.

There is also even to-day a reminder of the practice of the Trade Guilds of the Middle Ages which, as you will remember, employed police in their pay to look after the property of the members of their guilds. And to-day great companies like dock companies, the railways, collieries, and other big business concerns, provide their own police for the special protection of their own property.

The Metropolitan Police Force deserves particular mention





METROPOLITAN POLICEMAN

Policeman on point duty at Blackfriars Bridge during snow-storm.

*Fox*

because of the special position which it holds. This force was formed by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 and placed under the ruling of the Home Office, a department of the Central Government, under whose control it still remains. The London County Council, which contributes its share in rates to the upkeep of the Metropolitan Police Force, does not have control of the police in its area as do other local governing bodies.

Provincial towns have in the main only local interests and

local buildings to guard. The interests of London are world-wide. London is the political centre of the British Commonwealth of Nations. There are Buckingham Palace and the homes of other members of the Royal Family to protect. There are the Embassies of foreign nations. There are the Houses of Parliament and other great Imperial institutions, such as the British Museum, the National Art Gallery, and the offices of the great departments of State, such as the Admiralty, the War Office, Board of Trade and so on. There are the offices of the Dominion Governments, like Australia House. There are numerous foreign visitors, many of them persons of eminence, always present in London.

In times of unrest it is usually in the capital of a country where this is most felt.

Again, London, because of its great size and the wealth it contains, tends to be a centre for crime. And the police force of London is so large—almost an army in number—that it demands a special department for its control. These remarks show that a special police force, nationally controlled, best meets the needs of the Metropolitan area.

There is one small area of London which is not controlled by the Metropolitan Police Force. The City of London, that ancient part of London around the Mansion House, measuring about one square mile, retains an old privilege of policing itself. In other police forces half the cost is paid for out of the rates, and half out of Government funds.

Since World War I a number of authorities have employed policewomen. They were given power to do this in 1921. Some authorities, which have not engaged policewomen have employed police-matrons. The policewoman patrols the streets as do the policemen. The duties of a police-matron do not necessitate working outside the central police station. It can readily be seen that there are many duties, especially in connection with women and children, which can better be performed by policewomen or police-matrons than by policemen.



WOMAN POLICE  
CONSTABLE

From time to time you may perhaps see a policeman stop a motor vehicle and request the driver to show his licence permitting him to drive, or to prove that his vehicle has been registered, or that he has been insured against risk of accident to other people. This is another of the duties which twentieth-century life has imposed on the police service. Not only must the police see that a person is licensed to drive, but they must keep a look-out that no people drive who are under the influence of drink or drugs, and consequently are not in a fit state to do so. The police regulate the traffic both for convenience and safety. In fact, safety on the roads is one of the most difficult problems with which the modern policeman has to deal.

The fact that our British police are a civilian force inspires trust in it on the part of people generally, and also on that account the policeman is, by most people, regarded as a very helpful friend. His common kindly acts of piloting children and aged persons across the roads, his tactful regulation of traffic, his courteous consideration for strangers, his patient answering of questions addressed to him, and his helpfulness in cases of accident are well known to all. The policeman stands for law and order, and there can be no doubt that one of the reasons which make the British people a law-abiding people is the careful and considerate way the policeman carries out his work.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### Fire Brigade

#### Fire Fighting in Times Past

Once again let us look at the Rate Demand Note on page 8, and we shall see on it an item Fire Brigade Rate  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the £. This means that a person the ratable value of whose property is £50 will have to pay 50 times  $\frac{3}{4}$ d., that is 3s.  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. as his share of the cost of the upkeep of the fire-brigade for one year. What services does a ratepayer receive for his money?

Should a serious fire break out in his house, or on his business premises, he would call the fire brigade and in a very short space of time it would arrive and at once set about putting the fire out.

In any case of doubt it would be wise to send for the fire brigade immediately, so that the fire should not be allowed to get a hold of the premises before the firemen arrive. The fire brigade, too, would take steps to see that the fire did not spread to neighbouring property. So we see that a ratepayer does not pay only for the extinction of fires, but also for the prevention of their spread.

In however short a time a fire brigade may get to a fire, some damage is certain to have been done to property. A wise owner will have his property insured against loss through fire. It will be readily seen that it is to the advantage of a fire insurance company to have a fire put out as speedily as possible. And this reminds us of the time when the work of

putting out fires was in the hands of insurance companies, who maintained each its own brigade.

It is only about 50 to 60 years ago that even large local governing authorities began to take over the work done by the insurance companies.

As you go about your own town you may get a reminder of the time when it was the work of the insurance companies to put out fires. On some houses or other buildings which have been erected for 60 or more years, you may see "fire marks" placed on them. These "fire marks" are very small tablets, each bearing the name of an insurance company, which showed that the property was insured in that company against loss by fire, and would indicate to the firemen that in the extinction or prevention of fires by the company's brigade a building, bearing a "fire mark," would have preference in protection.

For nearly 800 years this fire-fighting work had been done by insurance companies. We have to go back to the years immediately following the Great Fire of London in 1666 for the beginning of this insurance work. The Great Fire brought forcibly to men's minds the loss which resulted from big fires, and so several fire insurance companies were established, which grew in numbers with the passage of time.

Fire fighting provides another example of private action leading to public action, for, in addition to the fire insurance companies' brigades, there were bodies of men who bound themselves together to assist in the work of putting out fires.

The danger of fire has always been a real one. It was the use of fire which made civilization possible, and fire has

been a continual menace, threatening to destroy what civilization has produced. So we must not look upon fire fighting as something modern.

Previous to the Great Fire of 1666 there had been only one really disastrous fire in London—and that in the year 1135. This may give some cause for wonder because houses were mostly made of wood. But great oaken beams did not readily catch fire and the spaces between the beams were filled by plaster which would not burn.

Few houses were built more than two storeys high, and only an occasional house had more than one fire in it. This fire was laid on a flat hearthstone. Before the family retired to rest the ashes would be swept together and, with the glowing embers, covered with a helmet-shaped object called a *couvre-feu*, which was made of metal. This not only kept a little fire in so as to save re-lighting on the next morning, but it also prevented the ashes from scattering.

When a fire did break out it was usually in the poorer parts of a town, where the houses were crowded together, and where thatch was used instead of tiles, and probably, too, in places where such inflammable things as oil, tallow, wool and so on were stored.

Some of the rules of fire fighting were known to our ancestors. They were not content only to pour water on a fire to extinguish it but they were ready with the use of hooks and grappling irons to pull down the walls of neighbouring houses in order to prevent a fire from spreading.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### Fire Brigade (*Contd.*)

#### Fire Fighting To-day

An order of the City of London, issued in 1668, will give us some idea of the fire-fighting equipment used at that period. This order commanded "the provision for every parish, and all the halls of the city companies, a certain number of buckets, ladders, brass hand squirts, pick-axe, sledges, and shod shovels."

Before the invention of the fire engine "many parish authorities stored a kind of syringe. This was about 3 feet long and held about half a gallon of water. It took three men to handle one. It was in use to some extent before the Great Fire, and increased in numbers afterwards until the fire engine, a movable water cistern, came into use in the closing years of the seventeenth century."

But the speedy development of fire brigades and equipment was one of the effects of the Industrial Revolution. Not only were buildings put up without any regard for the health and convenience of people, but they were also erected without any thought for their safety. A Government report on buildings, issued in 1842, tells us that flimsy dwellings were made of material which easily caught fire, and that the back-to-back houses, so common at that time, were built so

close together that fires easily spread. There were no building regulations such as would prevent fireplaces and furnaces being set in close to timber erections. And strangest of all, the report states that where a works had need to use fires, explosives, or easily inflammable material in its operations, nothing was done to keep that part of the works separate from the rest of the buildings.

Nowadays local authorities have the power to see that no flimsy buildings are put up, and that they must not be constructed of material which would easily catch fire. Owners of factories and workshops must provide their buildings with adequate means of escape in case of fire.

There are strict regulations regarding the storage and manufacture of all kinds of explosives or highly combustible material. A record is kept of the amount of inflammable material kept in any place.

When a citizen goes to a place of entertainment, arrangements are made to protect him from the fire menace. Fire escapes, fire extinguishers, fireproof curtains, and exits in a sufficient number must be provided in the buildings. Despite precautions taken to prevent the outbreak of fires, over £10,000,000 worth of capital is consumed yearly through fires in the United Kingdom. And so, at all times of the day and night, the fire brigade must be ready for work on burning buildings.

Take a peep at a fire brigade station. There stands the fire engine, ready to set off, as soon as a message is received of the outbreak of a fire. Arranged on the fire engine are the hose, fire escapes, scaling ladders, chemical extinguishers,



first-aid appliances, and other equipment. Almost before the message has been given, firemen have donned their fireproof clothing, put on their helmets, and slung their fire-axes by their side, and the clang of the fire bell is heard, making it known that a clear passage through the streets is



DUAL PURPOSE APPLIANCE (PUMP AND ESCAPE)

*By courtesy of the London County Council, London Fire Brigade*

needed for the engine, for the delay of even a second or two may mean the loss of life, or almost complete destruction of property.

As soon as the scene of the fire is reached, no time is lost before water is playing on it, even before the firemen attach their hoses to one of the hydrants, which one sees indicated by the letters F.H. marked in the streets at a distance of every 200 yards or so. For the fire engine carries a tank of

water under pressure for use, to avoid delay or to provide against any emergency which may arise.

The fireman has to enter buildings filled with smoke and fire, and to run the risk of accident or death from falling walls and ceilings. He has to scale lofty buildings to direct his hose for the play of water upon burning property or upon neighbouring property, in order to prevent the spread of the fire. A fireman's calling demands a high degree of courage, which we are proud to feel is never found wanting in the men of our fire brigades.

The fire-fighting arrangements in rural areas is still a matter of some concern, but it is not so serious as it was before the days of motor transport, as help can now be speedily obtained from a neighbouring place which has a fire-fighting equipment. Some rural authorities have adopted the use of trailer pumps. These pumps, which have one thousand yards of hose, can be attached to a motor lorry or large car, and towed to the scene of a fire. They are very powerful and three jets can be used.

It is indeed true that fire is a good servant, but a bad master. Much can be done by people themselves to prevent fires, for numbers have been caused by common acts of carelessness, such as the throwing down of lighted matches, the carrying of lamps or candles carelessly, and so on.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### Administration of Justice

#### Local Courts of Justice—The Coroner

Let us glance once again at the Rate Demand Note shown on page 8. There you will see an item—Administration of Justice and Coroner's Inquisitions. This may seem a difficult phrase for you to understand, but it is one easily explained.

The administration of justice refers to the steps which are taken to see that the laws of the country are carried out. A coroner's inquisition is the inquiry that is made into a case of sudden death, or death resulting from accident, or in the case of a person who has died and for whom a doctor cannot give a certificate of death—that is a certificate which sets out the causes of death—or again, where there is any suspicion that there has been foul play, that is, that murder or manslaughter may have been committed. The officer who makes this inquiry is called the Coroner.

In local government we are only concerned with two Courts for the Administration of Justice. These are the Courts of Petty Sessions, and the Courts of Quarter Sessions, both of which terms will explain themselves. The word petty means small or little, and it is in a Court of Petty Sessions that magistrates deal with cases of minor crimes, such as petty thefts, drunkenness, breaking of the by-laws, disorder and other offences, which are not very serious crimes.

In a Court of Petty Sessions there must be at least two magistrates present at any one time during a trial. They hear the evidence and if they come to the conclusion that the accused person, or persons, are guilty then the magistrates pronounce the sentence. If they find the accused person innocent he is discharged. The magistrates are directed in law by the Magistrates' Clerk, who is a lawyer and is always present to give them needful advice.

Courts of Petty Sessions are held in some of the larger boroughs, where only one magistrate, who is a lawyer, sits to try cases. He is a paid magistrate. This magistrate is known as a Stipendiary Magistrate because he is paid a salary, or stipend. Although the salary is paid out of the borough rate, the magistrate is not appointed by the local authority, but by the Home Secretary.

Whatever crime a person may be charged with he is first brought before a Court of Petty Sessions. If the charge should be a serious one, the magistrates commit the accused person for trial at a higher court, which may be the Court of Quarter Sessions or the Assizes.

In committing persons to higher courts for trial a certain responsibility rests on magistrates. They may decide that the charge against an accused person is so serious that he cannot be allowed to go free, until it is time for the trial to take place. In such circumstances, he is kept in gaol until the time of the trial. In cases of less serious nature the accused person may be let out on bail, that is, he may go free until it is time for him to be tried at the higher court, if he can get people, who are well known in a district, to answer for it

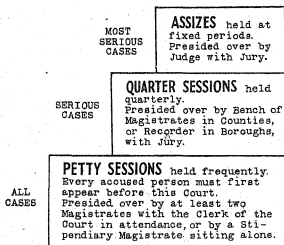
that he will appear for trial at an appointed time. These people agree to pay a sum of money as a penalty should the accused person fail to appear.

Very serious cases are committed for trial at the Assizes, but as the Assizes are not local courts we will not deal with them here. Cases which are of too serious a nature for a Court of Petty Sessions to deal with, but are not sufficiently serious for trial at the Assizes, are tried in the Court of Quarter Sessions, which is a court intermediate between a Court of Petty Sessions and the Assizes.

The Court of Quarter Sessions meets four times a year. In the counties these courts are presided over by a bench or number of magistrates, one of whom is appointed the chairman. In boroughs this court is presided over by a barrister, who is called the Recorder, and who is paid a salary out of the rates.

You must note one big difference between the Court of Quarter Sessions and the Court of Petty Sessions. In the former court the magistrates, or the recorder, must always sit with a jury of twelve men or women who are householders in the district, who will hear evidence in the case and afterwards give their verdict. To help them the chairman of the Bench, or the recorder, sums up the evidence and makes clear to them any points of law. If the jury find the accused not guilty he is discharged. If they find him guilty the magistrates, or the recorder, sentence the prisoner. Petty Sessions has no jury.

You have learnt from the reading of this book how far back into history we have to look for the beginnings of



various branches of local government. But there is probably none, which goes so far back as the first steps which were taken to see that justice was administered, and crime kept down. For example we have traces of the jury system even in Anglo-Saxon times. In early Norman days we find there were frequent disputes between different people, as to who were the owners of a piece of land. When such ownership was in dispute one of the parties to it could claim to have the question tried by twelve knights, who lived in the neighbourhood, and who, on oath, had to decide which of the claimants had the better right to the land. This was a practice to which can be traced the clause in Magna Charta which said it was the right of every free man to be pronounced guilty or to be declared innocent by a verdict given by his fellows, that is, by a jury.

The jury system is also employed in the Coroner's Court. The coroner sits with the jury when evidence is being given. He helps the jury by explaining to them any points of law which may not be clear to them, but he is careful not to let them know what he thinks their verdict should be. When the jury have come to a verdict then the coroner pronounces it. If the jury should be of the opinion that murder or manslaughter has been committed then it is the duty of the coroner to commit the suspected person for trial at the Assizes, and to give a warrant for his arrest.

How much better to-day is the administration of justice than in the early years of our history can be seen when we consider how disputes were settled in olden times.

Let us consider a method of Saxon times. In this method the accused person, having sworn that he was innocent, would bring a number of people who would take an oath that to the best of their knowledge the accused was innocent. The person who could produce most witnesses of character, usually won his case.

Then there was the trial by ordeal, in which an accused person was made to attempt impossible things, as for example, to pick up a piece of red-hot iron, or to walk upon it, without being burnt. It was thought that, if he were innocent of an offence, he would do the test without injury to himself.

The Normans introduced another method—trial by battle. In this method both the accused person and the accuser fought, and belaboured each other, until one cried "craven." It is an interesting fact that this method was not finally and legally abolished until the year 1819.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

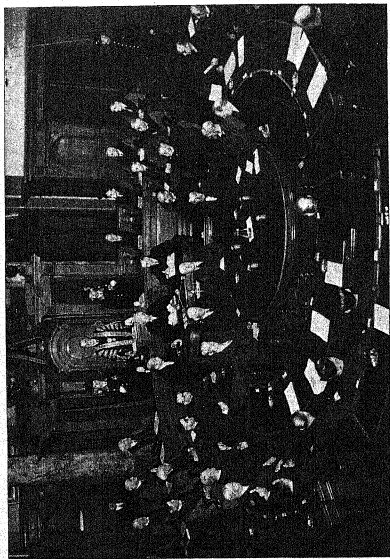
### Conclusion

This brief survey of the field of local government has now been completed. It will be seen that local government affects the citizen at all stages in his life. Some areas are, of course, better administered than others, and it will be found that in the areas which are fortunate in this respect the men and women are keenly interested in local government.

It is absolutely essential that everyone should vote at Municipal Elections. Only in this way can the citizen show that he is really interested in the kind of men and women who come forward to represent him. It is hoped that some of the boys and girls who read this book will in later life offer themselves as councillors. Indeed there is no reason why some should not live to see themselves Mayors or Lord Mayors.

It will also have been noticed how the present time is a period of change. Because of the war many new problems have arisen and Acts of Parliament have been necessary to help to solve these problems. New duties, particularly in Education and Town and Country Planning, have been laid upon local government. On the other hand, the hospitals, the electricity, and transport undertakings have been taken away from local authorities and put under the control of the State. This latter development should not mean that the citizen should lose interest in his local hospital or his local





A COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
*By courtesy of the British Council*

public utility services ; every individual is a citizen of the country as well as a resident in a town or a village. Therefore, although these services have been nationalized they are just as much his interest and concern as they were before nationalization.

Nothing in this world stands still. This little book has shown how the services have developed and changed through the centuries. The process of change is still with us, and a good citizen must pay attention to these changes as they occur.

Local pride is a fine thing. It is good that we should be proud of the area in which we live. That pride can be increased if we serve the area in which we live. That service is given, not by standing aside and criticizing, but by taking an interest in what is going on and playing a full part in the life of the community.



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